The Social Orpheus

shelley and the owenites



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SHELLEY AND THE OWENITES

COURAGE TO KNOW

M. SIDDIQ KALIM

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in memory of
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ABBREVIATIONS

The following abbreviations are used in this book:—

1. *Essays* for *A New View of Society: or Essays on the Human Character*, by Robert Owen, 2nd edition, 1816.
2. *Letters* for *The Letters of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, edited by Roger Ingpen, 2 Volumes, 1915.

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PREFACE

The *Social Orpheus* is actually an adaptation of the thesis I submitted for the M. A. degree of the University of London in May, 1960. It was during the very first term (October, 1958) when I had read the relevant periodical criticism that my supervisor, Professor Geoffrey Tillotson, asked me to look into the Owenite journals. While reading *The Crisis*, I had no idea that I should be working out some sort of relationship between the Owenites and Shelley. But turning over the pages of *The New Moral World*, I discovered a virgin field lying before me. It was, however, a thick jungle to be cleared; it needed a lot of thinking to evolve the present scheme of the book.

It is thus an attempt at an analysis of the use of Shelley in the writings of the Owenites. During this period of their intense journalistic activity, the Owenites drew upon literature for intellectual support and for illustration of their system. From among the contemporary Romantic poets, they identified themselves with Shelley, who alone was in perfect accord with them. Like Robert Owen, he had dedicated his life to the cause of the down-trodden. An attempt has also been made to study the Owenite view of Shelley in the context of the Shelley criticism during the years 1815—1840 as well as the rest of the nineteenth century. Moreover in my discussion of Shelley, I also keep in view the Shelley criticism, contemporary with us.

This book establishes that Owen knew Shelley and his writings well, and drew upon 'Notes' to *Queen Mab* for his ideas on love and marriage. Besides, their main sources being the same, there is an almost complete correspondence between their system of ideas. The Owenites also demonstrate a systematic point of view about literature, which I have had to build up here from scattered bits and gleanings. I have shown at the same time its close correspondence with Shelley's poetics. It was from this sociological cum political angle that they approached literary writings. The Owenites also had their own interpretation of Plato, which quite fitted their appreciation of Shelley. Their appraisal of his poetry, though in no way inferior to the contemporary criticism of Shelley, is only an illustration of the various aspects of their own system. Besides, they cited Shelley's authority on almost every occasion. A detailed study of such quotations, in the context in which they

appear, reveals that, in the Owenite view, Shelley was a prophet-poet. With him as a model before them, the Owenite poets wrote poetry for the exposition and propagation of the Owenite Socialism. This demonstrates an extreme oversimplification of their own theory. Finally, this book points out Shelley's contribution to the development of socialist thought and of socialist movement.

The Owenites first quoted Shelley in 1830, but Owen himself used him in his lecture on *The Marriage System of the New Moral World* in 1834. I have therefore listed in the Appendix the editions of Shelley's works till 1834 as it gives the exact idea of what works of Shelley the Owenites, and the general audience for that matter, had before them. For the same reason, my quotations from Shelley's prose and poetry as well as from Mary Shelley's Notes to Shelley's poems are also from the first editions with, however, two exceptions. First, the quotations from *Queen Mab* are from the edition of 1829, published by the Owenite publisher, John Brooks, since it is a re-print of the 1813 edition; second, a couple of quotations from *An Association of Philanthropists* are from a modern edition, since no copy of the first edition, in this case, is available even in the British Museum. In my quotations as well as the Owenite ones, I have used the line numbering of the Oxford text of Shelley, edited by Thomas Hutchinson.

As this book will show, the punctuation often in Owenite quotations seems to lack authority, but I have not recorded its deviation from the standard texts except at two or three places, with a view to giving an idea of such deviations. It may, however, be interesting to say that the punctuation in John Brook's edition of *Queen Mab* shows almost no deviation from that in the 1813 edition. These deviations can then only be attributed to a desire, on the part of the Owenites, to create effect in that these quotations use too many colons, dashes and signs of exclamation.

Lawrence and Wishart of London were inclined to publish this book in 1961 but they did not finally take up the work, afraid as they were of a very narrow market it will have. Later, the same view was expressed by the Oxford University Press. However, this work is now being published by the Research Council, Government College, Lahore, with the hope that all those research scholars and general readers who are interested in Shelley and Owenite Socialism, will still find it of some value. The justification for its publication today lies only in this awareness.

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October, 1973.

CHAPTER I

ROBERT OWEN AND SHELLEY

The Industrial Revolution brought about profound changes in English life which the poets and thinkers were not slow in perceiving, some of them even in foreseeing them. The setting-up of large scale cotton factories in the country, particularly in the North, established a new relation between the employer and the employee—hitherto unknown in the history of the world. It created two sharply divided classes, the master manufacturers and the operatives. This was an impersonal relationship, short of any concern that characterized the traditional relationship between the landlord and the serf. In fact, it was a change in the very mentality of the people, as a result of which the old institutions crumbled and new evolved, but the process entailed great misery and suffering. *The Memoir of Robert Blincoe* is a typical document that depicts what baneful effects the new industrial techniques could have on the life of the common people. The privileged few destroyed the beauty of life; it was but a vast expanse of darkness for the downtrodden. Out of the multifarious reactions of numerous poets and thinkers, a new movement emerged which was characterized as 'Socialist'.

Robert Owen, who has rightly been regarded as the father of British Socialism, was the first British thinker to understand the impact of industrialisation on the life of a large section of the British people. His practical experience gave him insight into the changing pattern of the society and all its implications. He was therefore able to analyse the new situation, and present a comprehensive plan as a remedy for the grave ills of the society. He devoted all his life to put his plan into action, and thus change the very pattern of the British people, if not of all the peoples of the world. Born of poor parents, Owen rose to become the manager of the largest spinning mills at a very early age of twenty by dint of hard work, practical sense and talent. He had no formal education, though as he relates in his autobiography, he was a voracious reader from his very childhood. His reading must have stimulated his thinking but some of his basic ideas, it seems, evolved out of his practical experience and daily observation. There is nothing original

in his teachings except perhaps his observations on the manufacturing system, and some of his ideas on education. Hazlitt called him the man of one idea, which is of course not literally true, though he did base his system on the one idea that "man's character is formed for, and not, by him". He was passionately devoted to the cause and sacrificed all his wealth in trying to bring about the millennium. Owen was practical and active all his life though towards the end of it, he became more of a visionary and a prophet. As he said in 1853, in his *The Future of the Human Race*, "The second coming of Truth is now to teach the world how to acquire and practise universal love and charity, and thus, not in words but in action, to prove their love to God".[1]

Shelley (1792—1822) lived and died during the life time of Robert Owen (1771—1858). The son of a baronet, a great reader from his very childhood, hypersensitive, he came into clash with authority from his early school days. It was in its very inception an intellectual revolt against being forbidden to read books on Chemistry; his expulsion from Oxford for writing "The Necessity of Atheism" carved out the pattern of his life. Owen was never personally involved in such situations, he analysed things dispassionately and tried to put his new views into practice cool-headedly. His school at New Lanark was a great success which drew the dignitaries of the world to see it for themselves. Shelley was an intellectual and a poet; it was not possible for him to make a cool analysis of the situations. He at once raised things to the level of imagination. Moreover Shelley was never mainly a man of one main idea as Owen perhaps was. Shelley's concept of intellectual beauty, Platonism and mysticism were unknown to Owen. Shelley was a man haunted by dreams and nightmares all his life, and could not see the actual for what it was. Naturally, a man who died at the age of twenty nine, who had such a complex mind and personality, was bound to suffer from some immaturity, vagueness and diffusion. Moreover, his concern with great issues and his interest in abstract ideas were themselves a source of these failings. There is some truth in such criticism made by his contemporaries down to F. R. Leavis, but it may perhaps be better to take these faults in the spirit in which for example did Leigh Hunt. One cannot do without the paradox that the young Shelley alone was the favourite of the radical reformers of the age. Although they also admired *The Revolt of Islam* and *Prometheus Unbound*, yet their interpretations are so sectarian that it is hard to believe that they understood them.

It was the Shelley of *Queen Mab*, the atheist and the radical that, on the whole, had great appeal for Owen and other social reformers of the time. The ethereal Shelley, grappling with the mysteries of life, deeply steeped in Platonism, soaring on his magical wings, haunted

1.p. 2.

by an imagination overwrought by the lure of ever elusive utopias, with an allied sense of persecution by the world, was simply unknown to them. Largely Shelley's is a poetry of ideas; in his life he showed little grasp of reality, as Owen, for instance, did at least till 1834. All the same, Shelley expressed his views in prose, clearly and forcefully, with remarkable understanding. It is also true that he had learned some lessons from his early 'Irish campaign' which he never forgot. He had realized that in practice reform comes slowly and one has to make practical concessions and not force the issue. Therefore he advised discretion and prudence, exemplifying them in his prose writings. Despite this, Shelley savours of the revolutionary at places even in his prose. In his poetry the element of violence predominates; his *Prometheus Unbound*, in spite of Prometheus's non-violence does, on the whole, give such an impression. The iconoclastic sweep, passionate ardour and reckless sincerity make *Queen Mab* extremely readable, and if one were not sophisticated enough to look for aesthetic values, one would be deeply moved, even to action. And that was the purpose of the poem. Lest readers be deceived by the quasi-allegorical form of the poem, he appended eleborate notes at the end. The 'Notes' are characterized by the same reckless passion as the poem itself. Herein lay his great appeal for the radical reformers of the age.

Like the radical reformers, Robert Owen and his disciples drew upon the literature of the time by way of illustration and for intellectual support. Of all the writers and thinkers that Robert Owen mentions, Shelley is the only one he considers worth quoting as an authority. Economists like Ricardo and Malthus are brought into discussion here and there in his writings but only to be contended against for having presented ideas and theories that, to say the least, the world could have little use for. Owen gives a list of the leading men of the age in his autobiography among whom he says he had become well-known for his four *Essays on the Formation of Character*. Later in the same work, he makes his relations with and attitude towards them absolutely clear.[1] Most of them, the Radicals included among them, were, if not entirely, at least partly, opposed to his views; only very few of them, like William Godwin and John Minter Morgan, were in complete agreement with his system.

Robert Owen was a practical man of business at least till 1828, when he withdrew from New Lanark. But, till his death in 1858, he was always a man of action. He had started his schemes for the amelioration of the pitiable condition of the operatives some years before the publication of his *A New View of Society*. Thus he had to deal with thousands of men whom he no doubt gave better conditions of living, and amongst the people that mattered, he converted quite a few, though for a short period of time. In this manner, he

1. *The Life of Robert Owen*, written by Himself, Vol. I., 1857, p. 212.

befriended many while contending against many more, till in his last days, pariticularly after the failure of the New Harmony in 1845, he was left all alone. But it was not in Owen's nature to retire from life and he carried on his work even in his extreme old age, when he took to spirit-rapping, as a source of spiritual sustenance. At this stage, that is, from 1853 onward, when he indulged in seances, he sought friends in the world of the dead. Although he still had some admirers and disciples, he could not look upon them as his friends since they were not intellectually his equals. From his autobiography, it is evident that, benevolent man as he was, he was no less an autocrat in his own sphere. Such a man naturally sought friends in those who had power—intellectual, political, or financial—but I should hasten to add, only to further the cause. Therefore when no such powerful friends were available, he fell back through spiritual mediums upon his friends among the mighty dead, for their advice and even their approval of his plans. His biographers have taken it as a deterioration of his mind. His contemporaries, his erstwhile friends among them, took it amusedly. Whatever view one may have of such spirit-rapping, as it was disapprovingly called, it reveals the condition of his mind as on a photographic plate. The people he affectionately remembers and converses with, he takes as his friends. One could safely conclude that he regarded them as having been in complete agreement with his system during their life. A passage from *The Future of the Human Race* will elucidate the point:

The most prominent persons who have departed this life within the last half century, who were deeply interested in the general improvement of society, without regard to class, or creed, or country, were President Jefferson, Benjamin Franklin, Shelley, Dr. Channing, and, for two or three of the last years of his life, His Royal Highness the late Duke of Kent, and I may add, though less known, Grace Fletcher... The spirits of these parties, all of whom, except Benjamin Franklin knew me in life, and were full converts or favourable to the new views which I early in life advocated and published, have in the kindest manner, and with extraordinary patience, and perseverance come to advise me as to further proceedings for the benefit of the human race, and to encourage me in the continuance of the measures which I have been impelled and deeply impressed to pursue from my youth upward.[1]

From the above it is clear that Owen had known Shelley during the latter's life time and had held him in very high esteem. Shelley was the only literary figure among those who were at least favourably inclined to Owen's system. The autobiography also records the first and only appearance of Byron at one of his seances. Another tribute to these spirits throws further light on Owen's respectful attitude towards these friends from the other world, who, as he says, "when in life, were known to be superior in their respective walks of life among their associates.[2]" Shelley was one of the frequent visitors at these seances. The following quotation from an account

1. pp. 31-32.
2. op. cit. p. 200.

of a brief conversation with Shelley during one of these seances indicates that Owen considered Shelley to be an old friend:

When the Duke left me, raps were made by a different spirit, (The raps of each spirit differ as much as their voices did when they were as they express it, in the flesh.) I inquired if the spirit would give me its name by the alphapbet? "Yes", And "Shelley" came out by spelling. This was the second time that Shelley had come to me. I said—"Is it the spirit of my old friend Shelley, the Poet?" "Yes"—In what sphere are you?" "Sixth sphere".[1]

The only other writers mentioned by Owen are Coleridge and Southey. Owen records in his autobiography that Coleridge, as an undergraduate, was considered "a genius and eloquent".[2] During his vacation at Cambridge, he used to join Owen and his coterie and had frequent discussions with them. "Many years afterwards, when he was better known and more celebrated",[2] Owen presented him with a copy of his *Essays*. Coleridge congratulated him on his conciseness and purposefulness. It was a tribute to Owen's style and not to his findings on human character and education. One gets the impression that Coleridge was trying to avoid a discussion of Owen's system as his style, although clear and forthright, is often slovenly and wordy.

Owen published a letter in *The Times* of 29 May, 1817 which was reproduced by *The Evening Mail*,[3] in which he answered some criticism made by Robert Southey to the effect that Owen's system was not founded on religion. Owen made it clear that if by religion was meant institutionalised religion, Southey was certainly correct. He also drew Southey's attention to his writings which he said explain what true religion is, the universal religion of humanity, uniting man to man. Again in *Robert Owen's Journal* of 14 December, 1850, appeared an article entitled "Rebert Southey and Owenism"[4]. It pointed out that the last week's *Christian Social.st* had published some extracts from what Southey had written about Owenism.[5] Southey had said that "National happiness must be produced through the influence of religious laws". He showed his agreement with the practical part of Owen's polity which could, according to him, best be effected within the Christian framework. In a supposed conversation between Montesinos (Southey) and Sir Thomas More, the latter asks: "But why do you think that the Owenite scheme is likely to be carried into effect by the sectarian agency?" Southey replied that religion creates a degree of generous and virtuous excitement that enables

1. *Rebert Owen's Rational Quarterly Review and Journal, Vol.* I, 1853, p. 224.
2. op. cit. p. 36.
3. No. 551 (From Wednesday, May 28, to Friday, May 30, 1817).
4. No. 7.
5. The Southey quotations in this paragraph are from Owen's journal and not from *Sir Thomas More; Or, Colloquies on the Progress and Prospects of Secicty*, by Robert Southey, where they can be found on pp. 144—145 in Vol. I, 1831 ed.

man overcome the first difficulties. He went on to argue that in spite of all his efforts, Owen had not been able to raise sufficient funds as he had not connected his scheme with any system of belief. Owen, in his usual way, answered Southey by saying that the world had no more use for religion.

Shelley, in his letter dated, "Before March 14, 1817", writes to his publisher, Charles Ollier: "I inclose you the Revise which may be put to press when corrected, and the sooner the better. I inclose you also a list of persons to whom I wish copies to be sent from the Author, as soon as possible.[1]" The list includes "Mr. R. Owen, of Lanark". Owen explained his system at length in his lectures at The City of London Tavern in the month of August 1817, in one of which he launched his frontal attack on Christianity and other religions. Leigh Hunt, writing to Shelley on 27 August, 1817, says: "What think you of your new counsellor, Robert Owen? He has made a great sensation in town, and will unlock myriads of lips.[2]" Owen and Hunt, according to Frank Podmore, one of Owen's biographers, were friendly with each other.

From the above evidence, it is clear that Owen and Shelley knew each other personally and held each other in high esteem. This conclusion is strengthened by the fact that they were in general agreement on their ideas on the reformation and regeneration of society. They shared the same ideals and were passionately devoted, in their different ways, to their realization.

It may be said that Owen quoted Shelley approvingly in a course of ten lectures on *The Marriage System of the New Moral World*, delivered in the year 1834. When they appeared in book form in 1835, the title page bears the following lines from Shelley as an epigraph:

> **Even love is sold! the solace of all woe**
> **Is turned to the deadliest agony ! Old age**
> **Shivers in selfish beauty's loathing arms;**
> **And youth's corrupted impulses prepare**
> **A life of horror from the blighting bane**
> **Of Commerce; whilst the pestilence that springs**
> **From unenjoying sensualism, has filled**
> **All human life with hydra-headed woes.[3]**

The first lecture bears the following:

> **Crime and misery are in yonder Earth**
> **Falsehood mistake and lust!**
> **But the Eternal World**
> **Contains at once the evil and the cure!**

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1. *Letters*, Vol. 2, pp. 541—542.
2. *Correspondence of Leigh Hunt*, Vol. I. 114—115.
3. *Queen Mab*, V. 189-196.

Some eminent in virtue shall start up,
Even in perversest time:
The truths of their pure lips, that never die,
Shall bind the Scorpion, Falsehood, with a wreath
Of ever-living flame,
Until the monster sting himself to death.[1]

The second lecture, the following:

The Harmony and happiness of man
Yields to the wealth of nations. That lifts
His nature to the heaven of its pride
Is bartered for the poison of his soul.[2]

The third lecture, the following:

The Suicidal selfishness, that blights
The fairest feelings of the opening heart,
Is destined to decay! Whilst from the soil
Shall spring all virtue, all delight, all love![3]

The "Appendix" to these *Lectures* is a long quotation from Shelley, introduced by a short editorial note which calls *Queen Mab* "beautiful and splendid". The note further says that "the very apt and well-told remarks", (the quotation), "appear as a note to that glowing, but true and beautiful, description of the present system of marriage". The quotation gives VV. 189—196 (cited above), followed by the whole of the long note to "Even love is sold".

All these quotations are also reproduced in the 1838 edition of *The Marriage System of the New Moral World*. But in another edition entitled *Lectures on the Marriages of the Priesthood of the Old Immoral World*, published in 1840, the quotation on the title page, as well as the "Appendix", disappear. These lectures are also stated to have been delivered in 1835 though the contents of these lectures in all the editions are the same. In another edition of 1840 entitled *Lectures on the Marriages of the Old Immoral World*, quotations from Shelley disappear altogether.

The obvious reason was the identification of Owen with Shelley, who in the eyes of the Tory Press was a poet of seduction, adultery and incest; blasphemy, rebellion, and anarchy. Naturally the leader of an important movement will take precautions against such a move on the part of a powerful section of the press. *The General Repository and Missionary Observer* of May 1839, while criticising Owen's followers for taking him as "Father", "true Messiah" and "as the wonderful inventor of this new system", gave its considered opinion in the following words:

1. *Queen Mab*, VI. 29—38.
2. *ibid.* V. 79—82.
3. *ibid.* V. 16—19.

We doubt, however, whether the distinction of invention (for Robert Owen has discovered nothing) belongs to him. Percy Bysshe Shelley had the same atheistical and immoral notions and actually perished, with a small company, by shipwreck, when going forth to form a settlement on the very principles.[1]

The Quarterly Review of March 1840, while reviewing the "Speech of the Right Reverend the Lord Bishop of Exeter on Socialism", said that Robert Owen had quoted with the highest applause from Shelley's *Queen Mab*, in his *Lectures on Marriage*.

John Brindley, who was taken by the Owenites and the Radicals as a hireling and mouthpiece of the Bishop of Exeter, in one of his pamphlets, attributed the "Appendix" to *The Marriage System of the New Moral World* to Owen himself. This was the main point at issue at a public discussion held in Bristol in 1841 between John Brindley and Robert Owen. Brindley argued that Owen had asserted that the previous copies, which he had forwarded to Brindley's Committee, had accidentally contained quotations of which he was not aware. But Brindley pointed out that the last copy sent to him did not differ in a single word from the previous ones. Owen's complaint was not against "the offensive misquotations having been made then, but in one of the tracts put out by Mr. Brindley "A quotation from Shelley was actually given as his (Mr. Owen's)[1]". Although Brindley replied that the Shelley quotation was not his immediate concern, it seems that Owen had to clear himself of the charge before an audience, the majority of whom were definitely hostile. Shelley's name was anathema, so was Owen's, and now both were being linked together. Brindley was one of his most foul-mouthed critics, who successfully played upon the cheap sentiment of the people. He presented Owen in the darkest possible light, not only maligning him and his son, Robert Dale Owen, but the whole of his family. Both by his precept and example, Owen had corrupted not only his own family but all his disciples and followers; he had poisoned the very air of Christian England. In order to clear himself of some of these dangerous charges, Owen resorted to sophism. He said that Robert Dale Owen's *Moral Physiology* (1835) was published in America without his knowledge and that it would be useless in Rational Society since there the problem would not exist. But he betrayed his tacit approval of the work by saying that it counteracted the evils of the Malthusian theory. About the *Social Bible* (1835) to which Brindley had referred as containing similar passages found in *Moral Physiology* or in Shelley, Owen replied that he had not seen the book before its publication and that its presentation of the Rational System was actually false. It must be said in fairness

1. No. 5 (New Series).

2. *What is Socialism? And what would be its Practical Effects upon Society?* (A correct Report of the Public Discussion between Robert Owen and Mr. John Brindley, held in Bristol, on the 5th, 6th and 7th of January, 1841).

Published by the Home Colonization Society, London, 1841.

to Brindley that the Social Bible does contain Owen's views on marriage, though not the Shelley extract. *The Book of the New Moral World* (1835), to which Mr. Brindley also referred, devotes a whole section to the question. Regarding the "Appendix", Owen again denied authorship and declared that he had a letter from the editor of the said work to prove that he had not even seen or heard of it before its publication. But Owen's intellectual honesty could not allow him to play the sophist very long. He said: "I could take any work, I could take the Bible, and make short extracts, which could appear different to what they really are". Owen then insisted that Brindley should withdraw the charge of the authorship of the "Extracts" from Shelley, and proceeded to read an extract from his *Manifesto*, but before he could do so, the chairman of the meeting pointed out "as the quotations made by Mr. Brindley had caused such a strong impression to be made on the meeting, ... they would not be satisfied unless Mr. Owen met those statements fully.[1]" Owen quite tactlessly or honestly, call it what your will, knowing full well that the audience could not be satisfied with anything less than a strong condemnation of the views expressed in the "Extracts" from Shelley, which would have meant a public disavowal of his own views—and that being Brindley's game—gave a vehement reply: "Then I state that those single short passages read by Mr. Brindley, give a totally different colouring to the whole of the work, to what the spirit of it would give, if they were to take it altogether.[2]" And that settled the matter in Brindley's favour. Owen not only showed his knowledge of 'Notes' to *Queen Mab*, but also his approval and appreciation. Brindley found further occasion to remark, and aptly, that "notwithstanding Mr. Owen's declaration to the contrary, he argued upon precisely as though Mr. Owen admitted it".[3] He then invited the attention of the audience to *The Book of the New Moral World*, published in 1839, which he said also "contained the same unhappy sheet as the former edition which he submitted to Mr. Owen"[4].

Medwin writes in his *Life of Shelley* that one evening he accompanied Sir James Henry Lawrence, "the historian of the Nairs", to the Owenite Chapel in Charlotte Street. On the table in the ante-room among many books for sale were lying *History of Nairs* and *Queen Mab*. They had an interview with Owen, after his lecture. Medwin states that "On finding that I was connected with Shelley he made a long panegyric on him, and taking up one of the *Queen Mab* from the table, read, premising that it was the basis of his chief tenets, the following passage.[5]"

1. op. cit.
2. op.cit.
3. ibid.
4. ibid.
5. *Medwin's Revised Life of Shelley*, ed. Buxton Forman, 1913, pp. 98—100.

"How long ought the sexual connection to last? What law ought to specify the extent of the grievance that should limit its duration? A husband and wife ought to continue so long as they love one another. Any law that should bind them to cohabitation for one moment after the decay of their affection would be a most intolerable tyranny, and most unworthy of toleration".[1]

This edition of *Queen Mab* had been published by John Brooks, one of the Owenite publishers, who, according to Medwin, had obtained a copy from one of his correspondents, who lived at Marlow. Medwin further stated his general view: "Queen Mab is indeed the gospel of the sect". An Owenite had told him that "he had found a passage in the Scripture, that unquestionably applied to Shelley, and that the world *Shiloh* was pronounced in the Hebrew precisely in the same manner as his name."

Middleton in his *Shelley and his Writings* (1858) confirmed Medwin's statement that *Queen Mab* was the gospel of the Owenites and that it was published by Brooks, the Owenite publisher, who had been able to obtain a copy of the 1813 edition.[2]

Buxton Forman was of the view that Middleton's knowledge of the book was derived from Medwin[3]. He adds in a foot-note to page 466 that the book was given by Brooks to Thomas Wade, "the author of *Mundiet Cordis Carmina* and numerous other admirable works, through the greater part of which runs a clear note of Shelley's influence". Thomas Wade died in 1875, and it was due to the great kindness of his widow that Buxton Forman was able to give the public this long-hidden book.

Charles Taylor's textual findings still further confirm the importance of Brooks's edition, even in the history of the transmission of the text. His examination of the many piracies of *Queen Mab* indicates that Ascham had used the handsome edition published by John Brooks in 1821 as the basis for his text. I should, however, like to point out here an inaccuracy in Mr. Taylor's otherwise admirable book. He conjectures that "It is impossible to be certain that the Brooks edition was not derived in turn from an earlier piracy, for the original edition was undoubtedly already rare and there were extant by that time at least the Clark, Baldwin (i.e. Benbow), and Carlile piracies of 1821, 1821, and 1826 respectively".[4] But as our present discussion shows, brooks had used a copy of the 1831 edition of *Queen Mab*. Moreover, Buxton Forman thought that Brooks had obtained his copy from Shelley himself[5].

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1. 'Note' to "Even love is sold".
2. Vol. I. pp. 256-257.
3. *The Works of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, Vol. III, p. 466.
4. *The Early Collected Editions of Shelley's Works*, p. 28.
5. op.cit. pp. 466-467.

It could now be said that Owen had found a friend in Shelley's writings. The Owenite journals, particularly *The New Moral World.* are full of quotations from Shelley. They eagerly cite his authority on almost all the problems and aspects of life, but of course, in terms of their own system. Shelley is first mentioned in *The Free Inquirer* of 16 January 1830, edited by Frances Wright and Robert Dale Owen, where a few lines from *Queen Mab* are quoted in an article. In their issue of 25 December, 1830, they give some extracts from his *Posthumous Works*, and in that of 1 January, 1831 is published an article on *Queen Mab*, giving copious extracts from the poem. *The Crisis* of 9 March, 1833 inserted an advertisement of new works saying, "All persons, particularly those of reflective mind, should read the following works, which may be had of Emonson, Publisher of the Crisis." Most of the books advertised were by Owen, and the only books of poetry included were those of Shelley. The advertisement is repeated in the next number. The subsequent advertisements in the journal invariably include works by Shelley. A perusal of the Owenite Journals reveals that the Owenites published various cheap editions of *Queen Mab, The Revolt of Islam* and *Promethens Unbound.* They also published a selection of his poetry entitled *Beauties of Shelley, with life* and a biography of Shelley entitled *Memoir of Shelley.* These books sold in thousands and ran into innumerable editions.

Rebert Owen and Shelley were themselves bracketed in Owenite Journals, not only in connection with the problem of love and marriage, but also regarding the fundamental Owenite doctrine that "man's character is formed for, and not, by him". The following extract from an article entitled "The Fallacies of Fourierism and the Advantages of Community, in Theory and Practice", to quote only one instance, will serve as a proof:

> **The glorious Shelley had bright glimmerings of it when, in a note to his "Hellas", he wrote, "It appears that circumstances make men what they are, and that we all contain the germ of a degree of degradation or greatness, whose connection with our character is determined by events". But it was left for Robert Owen to *reiterate* into the multitudinous ear of the world that "the character of man was formed for him, and not, by him," and how *it was formed.*[1]**

This does clearly bring out that Owen was not only indebted to Shelley for his views on love and marriage but also for his fundamental tenet. Their common source, however, was Godwin. It is possible tht in Shelley's writings Owen found, not an original source of inspiration, but more a confirmation and powerful expression of conclusions to which he had been led by his study of Godwin.

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1. *The New Moral World,* Vol. I (Third Enlarged series), No. 17, 24 October 1840.

Robert Dale Owen, who in his youth was a devoted son and a faithful disciple of his father, while describing his meeting with Mary Shelley, paid his tribute to Shelley by saying that the world had learned to recognize "despite extravagance of sentiment, and immaturity of opinion, the upright, unselfish man, and the true poet.[1] He went on to say that if he had not died at the age of thirty, "At all events, he would I feel assured, have gloriously carried out what he has confided to us as his youthful aspiration:—

> **I will be wise,**
> **And just and free, and mild, if in one lies**
> **Such power; for I am weary to behold**
> **The selfish and the strong still tyrannise**
> **Without reproach and check."**

It may be pointed out that the Owenites were noting with great interest whatever Shelley was publishing. Robert Dale Owen quoted from a letter of Shelley in his *Moral Physiology* saying that "I fully agree with that most amiable of heretics, Shelley, that seduction, which term could have no meaning in a rational society, has now a most tremendous one.[2]" Shelley had written this letter to Sir Henry James Lawrence on 17 August, 1812, and it was published by *The Lion* on 5 December, 1828. It might also be interesting to note that Robert Dale Owen cited a motto from Shelley on the title page of his booklet, *Addresses of the Hopes and Destinies of the Human Species* (1836).[3] Lloyd Jones, one of the leading Owenites, did the same in his pamphlet, *A Reply to Mr. Carlile's Objections to the Five Fundamental Facts as laid down by Mr. Owen* (1827)[4]. This practice was becoming customary among the Owenites in their propagation of views of which Shelley was held to be the greatest champion.

It might not be irrelevant to make a brief review of the Shelley criticism during the years 1815—1834 in order to understand the situation rather more clearly. *Queen Mab* when it came out, was mostly noted by the Radicals and was ignored by the Tories. It could be suggested that the radical journalism which was constantly presenting Shelley as the champion of the down-trodden, and was publishing articles on him, particularly on *Queen Mab*, encouraged the Owenites to consider Shelley as their friend. Richard Carlile, who brought out pirated editions of *Queen Mab*, was the first to notice Shelley and write an article on *Queen Mab* in his *The Republication* of 1 February, 1822. Richard Carlile was responsible for presenting him as a prophet and martyr though he dissociated himself from his views on marriage. He said that the "Society for

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1. *Threading My Way*, p. 296.
2. p. 27.
3. *Queen Mab*. V. 254-259.
4. ibid. III. 235-237.

the suppression of vice" had failed to suppress the public sale of *Queen Mab* and that their efforts would make it as popular as they had made the *Age of Reason*. He went on to say that *Queen Mab* is a philosophical poem, "remarkedly strong in its exposure of Kingcraft and Priestcraft." He also praised the 'Notes' as being of "equal beauties, and equal merit".

William Clark, who brought out the first pirated edition of *Queen Mab*, also published immediately afterwards *Reply to the Anti-Matrimonial Hypothesis and Supposed Atheism of Percy Bysshe Shelley as laid down in Queen Mab* (1821). This publication was in connection with his defence when the "Society for the Suppression of Vice" prosecuted him. It tried to prove that although Shelley professed to be an atheist, he was not so in actual fact, which is partly true if one were to argue only on the basis of *Queen Mab*. While noticing Clark's trial for the piracy of *Queen Mab*, *The Monthly Repository* also tried to prove that Shelley was not an athiest, explaining that he had presented visions, which were like idle expectations, born of discontent and indolence, having no substance in them.[1] These attempts aimed at making Shelley safe as well as instructive.

From amongst the poems written about Shelley during his life time, by Arthur Brooks, Bernard Barton, Horace Smith, and "F" (whose identity according to N.I. White remains unknown)[2], the "*Ode to the Author of Queen Mab*" by "F" deserves a special mention. The first stanza is a tribute to Shelley for living up to the ideal of a true poet and for dedicating his life to the achievement of liberty. The second stanza enlarges on the last line of the first, "A bard obscure invokes thy future praise", complaining that he is defrauded of legitimate praise by the press that is controlled by the church and the state. The third stanza is entirely in praise of *Queen Mab*. It presents Shelley as a prophet-poet:

> **These truths the voice of nations shall proclaim**
> **In coming times, and know, and bless thy name—**
> **Hail then, Immortal bard! hail thy future fame!**

Another great champion of Shelley, though possessing sufficient objectivity, was Leigh Hunt, the radical poet and journalist. *The Examiner* first took up Shelley's cause in December 1816. With this began Hunt's long polemical campaign in Shelley's defence, which continued for several years, even after Shelley's death. He was, however, not a blind admirer, he admitted together with Mary Shelley and Horace Smith that Shelley lacked in sufficient objectivity and maturity and hence suffered from vagueness in his poetry. But when

1. No. 17 December 1822.
2. *The Unextinguished Hearth*, p. 339.

it came to answering the Tory press, he was always an ardent champion. Shelley was identified with Leigh Hunt in the Tory Press and thus it may not be without interest to see what they thought of the champion himself. He was "the editor and chief writer of one of the most profligate radical prints of the day."[1] He was the promulgator of subversive opinions on the subjects of morality and religion and was thus "a vile ragged cur" and "a vulgar hack". So it may be correct to say that Leigh Hunt's appreciation of Shelley provided sufficient evidence to the radical reformers to look up to Shelley as their champion and friend; otherwise they might have been put off by his half-symbolical and half-allegorical method. The Owenites held Leigh Hunt in high esteem. They praised him in an article entitled "Cheap Literature and Social Progression" for setting an example in *The Indicator* of diffusing knowledge among the poor. He was thus responsible for commencing an enlightened literary era. He was "the herald of a new and more perfect philosophy, which is yet to be embodied in the institution of society."[2]

Contrary to the laudatory attitude of the Radicals, most of the contemporary criticism of Shelley is condemnatory. For example, *The Literary Gazette and Journal of Belles Lettres*,[3] reviewing *Queen Mab*, said that Shelley's crime was of such a monstrous nature that any possible means of suppression would be justified. He was taken as an apostate and an unfortunate young man—his name was anathema in Tory circles. The Tory journals painted even his best works in the blackest possible colour. The same journal observed in its issue of 8 December, 1821 that *Adonais* was hardly praise-worth having "For what is the praise of the cockneys but disgrace, or what honourable inscription can be placed over the dead by the hands of notorious libellers, exiled adulterers, and avowed atheists." Christopher North in a foot note to his review of *Epipsychidion* wrote that the object of Shelley's poetry was the "promotion of ATHEISM and INCEST", and "the unfortunate Mr. Shelley" was an "inspired idiot.[4]"

The same attitude of extreme denunciation or admiration was demonstrated by the obituary notices in 1822. *The Courier* wrote that "SHELLEY, the writer of some infidel poetry, has been drowned, now he knows whether there is a God or no.[5]" On the other hand, Hunt's letter to Horace Smith from Pisa, dated 25 July, 1822, called him "the divine-minded", "seraphic friend of the universe".[6] The

1. *The Quarterly Review*, Vol. XXXVII, No. 74, March 1828 (Article IV).
2. *The New Moral World*. Vol. I. (Third Enlarged Series), No. 6, 8 August 1840.
3. No. 226, 19 March, 1821.
4. *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, Vol. XI. No. 61, February 1822.
5. 12 August 1822.
6. Published in *The Morning Chronicle* of 12 August 1822.

same extremity of sentiment was displayed by the poems written on his death. Bernard Barton wrote his "Verses on the Death of Percy Bysshe Shelley" as a sort of corrective to the influence of Shelley and Charles Lamb approved of it. Arthur Brookes's "Elegy on the Death of Percy Bysshe Shelley", on the other hand, was dedicated to Leigh Hunt, "Companion and Admirer of the Illustrious Deceased,. . . .His friend and fellow-labourer." The advertisement put the poem as an imperfect attempt to commemmorate the talents and virtues of the "most distinguished philosopher, philanthropist and poet."

The Owenite journals, as stated above, start using Shelley's authority in 1830. By this time, his reputation had spread, first because of radical journalism, secondly because of the advent of new literary journals like *The Athenaeum*, *The Westminster Review* and *Fraser's Magazine*, and lastly because of the abated fury of the Tory magazines, which after his death, looked upon him somewhat dispassionately as a poet. *The Quarterly Review* of September, 1836, while reviewing his *Posthumous Poems*, upheld its previous view, but admired him as a translator.[1] Reviewing the same work, *The Edinburgh Review*, which for the first time, took notice of Shelley, gave mixed praise. It paid tribute to his honesty of purpose and beauty of life but disapproved of his poetic ideals. It remarked that "He mistook the nature of the poet's calling, which should be guided by involuntary, not voluntary impulses".[2] It may be interesting to add that the Edinburgh Reviewers' quarrel with the romantic poets from Wordsworth to Keats was one of literary principles and taste and not of religion or of politics. *Fraser's Magazine* of June, 1831 also admired Shelley's personal life, "there is not the less evident, the delicacy, elasticity, and concentration of a gentle and a noble mind, a deep scorn of all that is vulgar and base".[3] In its view, Shelley possessed a lofty enthusiasm for liberty and the glory of his country; he stood for the advancement of science and the arts. At the same time, it regretted that his passionate enthusiasm was not supported by his will. It also pointed out that the world had not listened to him in good taste. However, "Shelley had not only reflected his age but also voiced eternal immutable feelings of mankind."

In 1832, *The Athenaeum* published *Shelley Papers, Memoir of Shelley* by Medwin. The editor while differing from the author on his opinion of Keats, remarked in the foot note that "If not judged by creeds and conventional opinions, Shelley must be considered as a moral teacher both by precept and example: he scattered the seeds of truth, so it appeared to him, everywhere

1. Vol. XXXIV. No. 67.
2. Vol. XL. No. 80, July 1824.
3. Vol. III. No. 17.

and upon all occasions".[1] Medwin in this series of articles correctly remarked that the time when "Quarterly Reviewers can deal out damnation to anybody" as and when they liked, was happily over.[2]

Then he exhorted that Shelley's tenets should be taken as respectfully as those of Owen of Lanark or of St. Simon in France. In the same year, *Tait's Edinburgh Magazine* pointed out that the critics and the public, by confusing poetry with personal belief, had been unjust to the poet Shelley. "A poem to be rightly estimated, must be judged without reference to its author as much as painting or status.[3]" It must stand or fall by its own merit. It also analysed the prejudice against his poetry by explaining the circumstances which had shaped its character. In its view, *Queen Mab* and *The Revolt of Islam* were "attempts to shadow out, in an allegorical form, his views of a more perfect state of society, and the process by which it may be arrived at."[4]

The prefatory notes to various editions of Shelley's poems, indicate the same tendency that the journals demonstrated. The advertisement of *Epipsychidion* equated it with *Vita Nuova* of Dante. Galignani, in his Paris edition of 1829, found opportunity to chastise England for lack of sound judgment in the realm of art and letters. "In no nation but England do the reading public suffer others to judge for them, and pin their ideas of the defects and beauties of their national writers upon the practical diatribes of hired pens, and the splenetic outpourings of faction." John Aschem, in his edition of 1834, in the account of the author's life, described Shelley as one of the most extraordinary men of modern times. In his view, Shelley had taken upon himself to prove that evil was man made and that by proper consciousness, man could be made to return to the primitive, blessed state of purity.

In the form of poetry, Bell Scott paid homage to Shelley in a poem published in *Tait's Edinburgh Magazine* (1831) which he later included in his collection of poems.[5] It makes an objective appraisal of Shelley's views, but it is the attitude of admiration that sets its tone. Another collection of his poems contains two poems on Shelley, in which Scott appreciated his aspirations.2 In 1832, Robert Browning, a great Shelley enthusiast in his early youth, paid his homage to Shelley in his *Pauline*. He did not amend the poem even when he looked on Shelley somewhat severely in his

1. No. 249, 4 August 1832.
2. No. 250, 11 August 1832.
3. Vol II. No. 7, October 1832.
4. Vol. II, No. 9, December 1832.
5. *Poems by William Bell Scott/Ballads, Studies from Nature, Sonnets, etc.*, 1875.
6. *A Poet's Harvest Home/Being One Hundred Short Poems* by William Bell Scott, 1882.

mature age. His "Introductory Essay" to *Letters to P. B. Shelley* (1852) reveals his later critical attitude.

This wider appreciation of Shelley must have convinced those already in sympathy with him that the world was beginning to recognise what he stood for. Owen and his disciples must have found in this wider appreciation, a further corroboration of their interpretation of Shelley. Such a critical tendency must have lent them support in giving public expression to their approval and acclaim of Shelley. It is in the early 1830's that they start citing his authority, by way of an effective instrument in their own struggle against reaction and tyranny.

A similar denunciation to that of Shelley was experienced by Owen at the hands of the Tory press. He had also become a sort of anathema after his lectures in the City of London Tavern in August, 1817. He mentions in his autobiography that until the hour he had made his frontal attack on religion, he had been the most popular man in England. From that moment, as if all of a sudden, he became the most unpopular and undesirable.[1] In one moment, he destroyed his reputation that it took him years to build up; but Owen had then reached a stage where popularity or unpopularity did not matter.

Thus the contemporary scene presents two prophets, as their admirers had by now come to believe them, being persecuted for sharing and working for the same ideal. This might have been a factor in bringing them together personally as well as spiritually, and in the light of the above discussion, it is not hard to believe that from 1817 to 1822, they had a sense of shared suffering. With the growing denunciation in the Tory periodicals, Owen starts publicly displaying his identification with Shelley. During the 1830s and 1840s, the hostile criticism reaches its peaks, and in the pages of *The New Moral World*, one comes across Shelley's name at every other page, in one connection or another.

The Tory Press heaped much abuse on Owen's head. It carried on a campaign of persecution against him. For instance, *The Quarterly Review* of December, 1839 opened its attack as follows:

> **There is a certain Robert Owen, notorious to the public for several extraordinary speculations, but principally for a theory of political and moral government, which he calls *Socialism*, and of which the main features are Atheism and the prohibition of all religion, especially the Christian....the irresponsibility of men.. appetite and self-indulgence the only rational rule of human conduct....a community of goods....and....we hardly know how, with decency to express the monstrous proposition....the abolition of that restrictive engagement which we call *marriage*, but which Mr. Owen stigmatises as 'an accursed thing', 'an unnatural crime' 'a satanic device'.[2]**

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1. op.cit. p. 189.
2. Vol. LXV. No. 129.

In its view, the Reform Bill was responsible for giving audacity to people to preach a system, subversive to the sacred institutions. The Tories openly accused the Melbourne Ministry of its sympathy with Owen, pointing out that Melbourne had presented him to the then virgin Queen. They showed great alarm at the numerous proselytes that Owen had made and the rate at which they were flocking to him every day; their meetings in such industrial cities as Machester, Liverpool, Birmingham, and Leeds were usually attended by not less than two thousand persons. They had their Sunday schools and libraries. The article ended with an impassioned appeal, mingled with threats, to the government to prosecute Owen and his followers for their perversion, heresy and sedition. The *Quarterly* in its March number of 1840, reviewed the "Speech of Right Reverend the Lord Bishop of Exeter on Socialism" in which he had called attention to two new curses, Owenism and Chartism. They were the necessary and natural development of Dissent and Whiggism, carried to their logical conclusion. The Bishop testified to the large following of Owen, his organization and its network of propaganda. With great emphasis, he invited the attention of the Queen to the solemn pledge she had given to protect the religion, the morals and the property of the people, on ascending the throne. This provided *The Quarterly* another opportunity to malign the government for its weakness and laxity. If blasphemy and sedition are not the proper subjects of legal prosecution, "May we ask then, what is the use of a government? What need of laws, and courts of justice, if the grossest of crimes....treason against God and our country are encouraged by the sight of punishment?[1]'

The facts regarding the large number of the Owenites and their extremely well-knit organization were taken by their opponents from the Owenite journals themselves. The Owenites, while reviewing *Sketches by Boz*, made a forceful plea to the conservatives to consider their proposals and to forget the eloquent speeches of the Bishop. They further stated how their cause, because of its sincerity, had won the hearts of thousands of people and "upon the issue of which, hundreds,—we will not use so extensive a term of saying thousands,— are prepared at this moment, to stake all that they hold dear."1

Owen was so alarmed by the furious speech of the Bishop and his impassioned appeal, mingled with threats, to the government, which was further belstered up by *The Quarterly* and the rest of the Tory press, that as President of the "Universal Community Society of Rational Religionists", he presented a petition to the Parliament, the government and the Queen. He had, however, the courage and honesty of conviction to assert once again even in this defence

1. Vol. LXV. No. 130.
2. *The New Moral World*, Vol. I. (Third Enlarged Series) No. 3, 18 July 1840.

that it would be vain to attempt the union of the old and the new. He also pointed out that time was on his side, history of England had proved it so, at least to some extent. Since the publication of his views on marriage,

the new marriage act, has been made exactly to meet my wishes and all that I now desire is to see another law enacted, by which *Divorces*, under wise arrangements and *on* principles of common sense, may be obtained, equally for the poor as well as the rich, to remove the cause of such existing deception, prostitution, promiscuous intercourse, and crime, and the dreadful evils which necessarily follow from them to both sexes, but especially to the poor unprotected part of the female sex, whose extremity of suffering is so much hidden from the world. The change in the law of divorce is all that is now required to satisfy the Socialists.[1]

We have already seen that the inspiration and authority behind this compaign for liberalising the laws of marriage and divorce was Shelley.

The Owenite journals were themselves reprinting the condemnation of Owen and his system in the Tory press in order to point out the extreme folly of the reactionaries and the unexampled courage and spirit of their own prophet. *The New Moral World* quoted a comment from *Berkshire Champion* of 22 December, 1838 entitling it "Critics Criticised". It had described Robert Owen as "a mono-maniac, who wastes much precious time and some natural abilities, in a contest with the whole fabric of society, the experience of all ages, and the convictions of every thinking man."[2] The same journal quoted an extract from *The Morning Herald* of 12 August, 1840 entitled "Go from home, if you wish to know your own character". It had announced with great joy the formation of a committee "for the counteraction and suppression of that hideous form of infidelity which assumes the name of Socialism."[3] This was to be done by the circulation of tracts and the delivery of lectures. It referred, no doubt, to the activities of the Bishop, when it said that highly important legal steps were being taken in that the case had already been submitted to the government, urging the strongest possible action against the Owenites. Besides, it repeated the same details that the Bishop had given in his famous speech and which the *Quarterly* had reviewed in still more forceful language. This consisted in the charges of blasphemy, indecency, excitement, and consequently the spread of anarchy on one side and the corruption of morals on the other. The committee hoped to check the spread of this poison, that led to profligacy and crime. *Robert Owen's Journal* quoted from *The Weekly Dispatch* which had urged that "we must either put down Socialism, or it will put us down. The masses take to it eagerly, and swallow its promise

1. *Manifesto of Robert Owen*, 1840, p. 6.
2. Vol. V. No. 11, 5 Januanry 1839.
3. Vol. I (Third Enlarged Series), No. 8, 22 August 1840.

greedily."[1] Then there was Mr. Brindley, going up and sown the country, making speeches and writing tracts as well as holding public discussions with Owen and his missionaries. His greatest triumph was Owen's defeat at his hands in Bristol, as we have seen above.

Shelley, from the very beginning, was passionately concerned with the reconstruction of society. He saw mankind unnaturally divided into two classes—the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. Even in his day-to-day life, he always tried to do his bit for the down-trodden. At Termadoc, he enjoyed the reputation of a very generous and kind-hearted person. Shelley's Irish campaign was a practical step to arouse people to change their own condition, though according to his ideas. His manner and style reveal much of the hot radical, but the core of his teachings strikes the note of non-violence, thus rendering the course of action suggested by him unpractical. He, unlike Owen, had realized that it is people alone who can change their own condition; but he first would like them to be wise and virtuous. So Shelley's is an intermediary position between Owenism and Chartism. His Irish campaign soon convinced him that he was not made of the stuff of revolutionaries. Henceforth he maintained his participation in the current politics of the country only at the literary and journalistic level.

Queen Mab was a great document. It presented the new theory of history, which was later regarded as socialistic in its interpretation of the past and the present as well as in its exposition of a new social system for the future. The poem no doubt reflected much of the misery Shelley had seen with his own eyes in Ireland and in England. It also perhaps referred to the Luddite riots.

Shelley's prose writings were usually inspired by particular events. *An Address to the Irish People* and *Proposals for An Association of Philanthropists* (1812) were written during his Irish campaign. "A letter to Lord Ellenborough" (1812) was written when Eaton was sentenced to the pillory and to one year and six months' imprisonment for publishing Paine's *Age of Reason*. This, as well as his letter of protest to Hunt on Richard Carlile's prosecution, is a contribution to the campaign for the freedom of press. A *Proposal for putting Reform to the Vote throughout the Kingdom* (1817) should be read together both with *Oedipus Tyrannus* (1817) a contemporary satire, and *An Address to the People on the Death of Princes Charlotte* (1817), as a contribution to the much desired Reform, which had created intense political activity in the country. When Queen Caroline was charged with infidelity, Shelley found himself technically on her side. He took this opportunity to make another attack on the government for its corrupt practices

1. Vol. IV. No. 74, 27 March 1852.

and the perpetration of tyranny. *Oedipus Tyrannus* carries the following motto that smacks of blood and dagger:

> **. . . . Choose Reform or civil-war,**
> **When thro' thy streets, instead of hare with dogs,**
> **A CONSORT QUEEN shall hunt a KING with hogs,**
> **Riding on the IONIAN MINOTAUR.**

Shelley's greatest contribution to the contemporary British politics are *A Philosophical View of Reform* (1820)—not published till 1920—and *The Mask of Anarchy* (1819), which Leigh Hunt suppressed till 1832, rightly thinking that "the common enemy would take advantage of the mistake to do them both a disservice". As Shelley's letter of 16 September, 1819 to Charles and James Ollier shows his blood boiled on hearing the news of Manchester massacre. It was a culmination of a series of troubles, tension, and riots during the course of which the law, by always prosecuting and punishing the poor, had established itself as the enemy of the proletariat. A meeting was to take place in Manchester on 9 August, 1819, which Orator Hunt and Major Cartwright were to address, but it was cancelled, having been declared illegal by the magistrates. It was however held on the 16th and it is not absolutely clear whether this meeting was declared illegal or not. During the course of this meeting, people remained peaceful, even though the banners bore such inscriptions as "Equal Representation or Death", and "Die like Men and not be sold like slaves". Hunt had hardly started addressing the people, when the soldiers, all of a sudden, without any provocation, rushed with their swords and fell upon them quite recklessly. Nine persons were killed, four hundred and eighteen were injured, and one hundred and seven women were wounded. It has been called "the most celebrated and perhaps the most important of all meetings held in England in the interests of democracy between the gathering of Stephen Langton and his barons at Runnymede in 1215 and the passing of the Reform Bill of 1832."[1] The pamphleteers and lampoonists, in their attacks on the government, used the incident to the full. Leigh Hunt responded by writing two poems, "Manchester Yeoman" and "A New Chaunt". But in the case of Shelley, it opened the flood-gates of his wrath:

> **Rise like lions after slumber,**
> **In unvanquishable number,**
> **Shake your chains to earth like dew,**
> **Which in sleep had fallen on you—**
> **(XXXVIII).**

As a contrast to Shelley's reaction as well as to that of Leigh Hunt's if not to that of the radical agitators like Orator Hunt and Major Cartwright, Owen's attitude during these years of intense

1. Stanley Walker, *P.M.L.A.*, Vol. XL., "Shelley, Peterloo and Reform," March 1925.

political activity, was one of ploughing his lonely furrow. But this was not due to lack of courage. During his lectures in the city of London Tavern, he was called upon to show the greatest possible courage, for his attack on religion, as he himself feared and as Lord Brougham attested, might have cost him his life.[1] He still honestly believed, though perhaps disappointed in people of power, wealth, and intellect, that things were to be done for the poor and not by the poor themselves. His belief in non-violence and the silent power of truth was still very strong. Virtue and wisdom, he thought, would have their conquest quite unobtrusively. This is what Shelley also taught, but much of his language, style and tone of his poetry and often his prose savour of a radical agitator. Owen always remained cool and logical in his writings and speeches, displaying no passion at all. He, no doubt, dealt out warnings about revolution, and his writings established him as a dangerous person, but he himself meant no harm. The reason why he did not react violently to the Peterloo Affair was that he had put no faith in Reform. Political changes in his opinion, could not be appropriate remedies for economic grievances, later events were to prove him right. The following remarks in "The Liberty of the Press, and Free Discussion" bear testimony to this opinion:

> **It has been our aim on various occasions, to shew the readers of the *New Moral World*, that mere political reforms would effect but little towards the emancipation of suffering humanity, from the manifold trammels wherewith irrational institutions has (*Sic*) surrounded it; and purpose now, to notice on one or two occurrences, which, in our opinion, strikingly confirm this view**[2]

No doubt, he saw more clearly then people like Cobbett and Orator Hunt, the real economic causes of distress. He was the first man to understand the real meaning of the revolution brought about by machinery. On the other hand, they were advocating the only practical method that logically followed from Owen's teachings. Owen himself appeared never to have realized this ultimate conclusion to his own analysis of the situation.

However, as G.D.H. Cole[3] has analysed, in 1832 Owen found himself the head of the first great revolt of the British proletariat, without preaching any doctrine of class struggle. Owen at this stage was fitted to meet this need. He founded his Equitable Labour Exchange in 1832. His gospel of social co-operation and society as a co-operative commonwealth of producers had greatest appeal. The Trades Unions now worked for collective bargaining and establishment of a co-operative system, free associations not only of consumers but also of producers. What Owen took as a millen-

1. *Life of Robert Owen*, written by Himself, 1857, p. 164.
2. *The New MoralWorld*, Vol. I (Third Enlarged Series), No. 13, 26 September 1840.
3. *Robert Owen*, 1925.

nium was turned into a political instrument of guilds and manufacturing societies "strong enough to dispense with employers and the exploitation of labour for private profit."[1] In 1833, the powerful Builders' Union organised itself into the Grand National Guild of Builders, and thus made an ambitious attempt to take over by direct economic action the control of the entire building industry. Immediately afterwards came into existence the Grand National Consolidated Trades Union, "a body seeking to include all producers within its scope, and by the threat of a general strike to enforce, first a universal eight hours day, and soon a complete transformation of the industrial system."[2] Owenism and Socialism became synonymous terms. Owen at this stage was the undisputed leader of the whole labour class, and the younger group of radical reformers like G.J. Holyoake, William Thompson, Hodgskin and Lovett became his disciples. They in their turn wielded great influence among the trade unionists and workers. The gospel of socialization from above became a gospel of socialization from below. Owenism was used as a weapon by the trade unionists in their struggle against the bourgeoisie. Owenite societies became missionaries of unionism as well as co-operativism. Owen himself ceaselessly toured the country, lecturing and talking to the trade unionists. The final glory came when he led in this capacity, a monster procession to the Prime Minister for the repeal of the sentence of six Dorchester labourers to seven years' transportation, and later addressed a mammoth gathering of 30,000.

It may be appropriate to reproduce here the tribute that was paid to Owen by Ebenezer Elliott, the Chartist poet, popularly known as "The Anti-Corn Law Rhymer", in an address on behalf of the Trade Unionists of Sheffield in 1834: "You came among us as a rich man among the poor, and did not call us a rabble. This is a phenomenon new to us. There was no sneer on your lips, no covert scorn in your tone."[3] No doubt in those days (1830—1834), Owenism was the guiding spirit of the trade union movement.

The Great Trades Unions broke in 1834 as a result of the repressive measures taken against it by the government. When the "Amalgated Societies" reorganised trade union activity later the same year, it refused to accept Owen's advice. He had already fallen out with Joseph Smith, the editor of *The Crisis*, and James Morrison, the editor of *The Pioneer*, the official organ of the Trades Unions. The clash was brought about by their conflicting attitude towards religion which Smith and Morrison upheld, and strike and violence which Owen opposed. After 1834, Owenism ceased

1. op. cit. p. 22
2. ibid.
3. G. J. Holyoake, *The Life and Last Days of Robert Owen*, 1871, p 19.

to serve as inspiration to the trade union movement; and the main body of the workers went back to political agitation. Many of the Owenites were absorbed in the Chartist movement though Owen and his orthodox disciples concentrated on reorganizing their own societies.

From the above, it is clear that Owen, the apostle of non-violence, was led to believe for a short period by the application of Owenism by the Trade Unionists, that radical agitation could be an effective instrument in bringing about the millennium. Shelley, on the other hand, had realized early in life that he could play his radical role only at the literary and journalistic level. Both were apostles of peace and non-violence, and believed that if man became wise and virtuous, he could defeat the forces of evil and bring about the millennium. Shelley's writings, however, savour of a revolutionary, but it was Owen who actually acted as the leader of the radical agitation for four years of his life.

The above makes us see how Shelley became the poet of the working classes. Owen, no doubt, is the father of British Socialism. Shall we not say that Shelley then is the god-father? The radical reformers and agitators often disputed the wisdom of Owen, but Shelley's word was the gospel truth.

CHAPTER 2

THE CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN ROBERT OWEN'S AND SHELLEY'S SYSTEM OF IDEAS

Robert Owen and Shelley presented perhaps nothing original in their system of ideas. Apart from sources like Rousseau and the French Encyclopaedists, their dependence upon and derivation from Adam Smith, Thomas Paine, William Godwin, Mary Wollstonecraft and Jeremy Bentham can be clearly seen in their writings. Shelley acknowledged his debt and sources in a scholarly manner, in the form of references, quotations, and foot-notes. He had a very wide reading and had absorbed ideas from many sources but the greatest influence was Godwin's as he himself records in his letters. He never lost his admiration for Godwin as a philosopher. In a letter to him, while feeling apologetic for his indignant reply on the matter of pecuniary help, he took the opportunity to pay him this tribute: "I respect you, I think well of you, better perhaps than of any other person whom England contains; you were the philosopher who first awakened and who still as a philosopher to a very great degree regulates my understanding."[1] Moreover, Shelley maintained till the end of his life that his generation had benefited a good deal from Godwin's writings, and that they would also serve as a beacon light to the coming generations.

Robert Owen, unlike Shelley, does not mention his sources at all. As he records in his autobiography, he was a voracious reader from his childhood, and the books that he mentions are in no way related to the system that he later evolved. For lack of formal education perhaps, he had no regard for scholarly methods and acknowledgment of intellectual influences. He read and absorbed ideas which in course of time became his own, leading him to the belief that they were his own creation. Some justification for this may be found in the pattern of his own life in which is rooted his approach to the social problems of the day. Owen was stimulated to thinking about the evil he saw all around him by the dire misery of the half-naked, famished and diseased people working in cotton factories. He arrived at some of his ideas from

1. *Letters*, 3 May 1816.

his own experiences of life; this was an empirical approach which enabled him to analyse the effects of the manufacturing system on the life of the people. Shelley's, on the other hand, was a speculative approach, he derived his ideas from books and applied them to the conditions of life, then obtaining in England. Owen always claimed these ideas as his own, at least the basic idea on which he founded his system that "man's character is formed for, and not, by him". It was in fact one of the main ideas of the age, and Godwin had popularised it by entitling the third chapter of his celebrated book, *Enquiry Concerning Political Justice*, as "Characters of men are engendered in external circumstances". Being however a modest man, passionately devoted to his cause, Owen never wanted to enter into the discussion of sources and influences since that was bound to entail an unnecessary diversion from his real work of exposition and propaganda. We have an interesting account of Owen's intellectual activity in his son, Robert Dale Owen's autobiography.[1] He says that Owen was not, in any true sense of the word, a student. "I never found, in his extensive library, a book with a marginal note, or even a pencil-mark of his, on a single page. He usually glanced over books, without mastering them; often dismissing them with some .... curt remark". But according to his son again, Robert Owen had eminent mental qualities both as a teacher and employer. Napolean was not more untiring in his perseverance or Swedenborg in a more implicit faith in himself, than Robert Owen. He had a sanguine temperament and could conceive of no failure.

It may be interesting to mention that Francis Place, looking into his papers, accidentally discovered John Beller's *Proposals for raising a Colledge of Industry*, and invited Owen's attention to it. Owen, as he records in his autobiography, got it reprinted and distributed.[2] At that time, Owen acknowledged his debt to previous thinkers. He said that he had acquired his knowledge on the subject of the reconstruction of society from his long and extensive experience, adding that the measures that he advocated had repeatedly been recommended by great philosophers from the earliest period of history. He then paid John Bellers this tribute. "I have no claim even to priority in regard to the combinations of these principles in theory; this belongs, as far as I know, to John Bellers, who published them and most ably recommended them to be adopted in practical, in the year 1696.[3] But in his subsequent writings, he always claimed the system as his own, forgetting John Bellers altogether. As already discussed, there is more of innocence than presumption in this attitude of Owen's.

1. *Threading My Way*, 1874, pp. 67—68.
2. *The Life of Robert Owen*, Written by Himself, Vol. I, 1857 p. 240
3. *A Catechism of the New view of Society and Three Addresses.*

Some evidence is provided by Robert Owen and his son in their autobiographies that Owen was a frequent visitor at Godwin's house. Frank Podmore makes a detailed study of the correspondence between Godwin's and Owen's system of ideas. Here it may suffice to say, as seen above, that Owen got his basic tenet from Godwin. The Owenite journals provide ample evidence that *Political Justice* was the main source of Owen's ideas. The following quotation from the "Sketch of the History of Socialism" throws sufficient light on Owen's indebtedness to Godwin:

> **. . . . the poetic genius of Rousseau, the philosophical poetry of Condorcet, and the deliberate reasoning of Godwin, on the subject of Social Equality and community of property, produced many converts to the new principles, and laid the foundation of a school of Socialism which has been gradullay ripening into methodic and practicable theory."[1]**

At another place, in a note on "Popular Charity" Godwin is acknowledged as "a great authority for Socialists".[2]

The Owenites regarded *Political Justice* as an epoch-making book, "where existing institutions and arrangements are all thrown into the crucible and having been severely tried and tested, the gold is extracted from the dross."[3] This evidence establishes the fact that Godwin was the chief source of Owen's ideas. Hence he is the common source for both Owen and Shelley.

It would be best to characterize Owen as a practical thinker whose main ideal and concern was to change the world. Marx's famous statement, though it was made later, perfectly represents Owen's point of view: "Philosophers have only interpreted the world in different ways. What matters is to change it." Owen himself made it abundantly clear in his *Essays*. He said in the first of them, "The present Essays . . . . are not brought forward as mere matter of speculation, to amuse the idle visionary who *thinks* in his closet, and never *acts* in the world; but to create universal activity, pervade society with a knowledge of its true interests".

In the case of Shelley, it may suffice to depend solely upon 'Notes' to *Queen Mab*, in order to demonstrate the correspondence between his and Owen's system of ideas. These, as we have seen in chapter I, Owen had definitely read. It can also be presumed that he knew *A Proposal for putting Reform to the Vote throughout the Kingdom* since Shelley had instructed his publisher to present it to him on his behalf. Perhaps Owen had also seen *Address on the Death of Princess Charlotte* which came out in 1817, a year of political turmoil and agitation. *The Revolt of Islam* and *Prometheus*

1. *The New Moral World*, Vol. IV. No. 185, 12 May 1838.
2. *ibid.* Vol. II (Third Enlarged Series), No. 4, 23 January 1841.
3. *ibid.* Vol. VI (Third Series), No. 2, 6 July 1844.

Unbound, besides *Queen Mab*, were also known to him. The Owenite journals included them in their advertisement of books which they specially recommended for deep study, and published a series of articles on them. One could fairly conclude that Owen was well acquainted with the important works of Shelley. However, it remains to emphasize the fact that 'Notes' to *Queen Mab* was a serious intellectual, propagandist effort on Shelley's part. The views that he held in 1811 did not undergo any change till his death though they attained a certain breadth and profundity through his subsequent reading, especially of Plato who mainly influenced him regarding his concepts of love and beauty and the spirit of the universe. This, however, did not interfere with his socio-economic views, his political ideals or his notions of love and marriage. Platonism, too, was not a sudden influence, besides being temperamentally inclined he had very early learned from Spinoza the concept of the pervading spirit of the universe that contains the wisdom and virtue to be found in the world. Shelley never believed as did Plato in the "World-Soul", but in Intellectual Beauty. It may be correct to say that Shelley has clearly outlined a socio-economic system in his 'Notes', but his views on philosophical problems in the 'Notes' as elsewhere, are fragmentary and inconclusive.

Coming back to the importance of the 'Notes', we find Shelley writing to Thomas Hookham that "The notes to "Q.M." will be long and philosophical. I shall take that opportunity which I judge to be a safe one, of propagating my principles, which I decline to do syllogistically in poem."[1] He reiterated this in his subsequent letters to his publisher. Shelley's letter on Clark's pirated edition of *Queen Mab* in 1821 to Charles Ollier, Mary Gisborne and Horace Smith, call the poem "silly trash" having "all the bad poetry in it". As regards the 'Notes', he merely refers to them, without making any comment. Perhaps he was right that the poem as well as the 'Notes' would do more harm than good to the cause. A study of his letters reveals that in certain cases, Shelley could act with great discretion and tact. This is borne out, to give only one example, by his extremely polite letter to Southey on his supposed review of *The Revolt of Islam*[2], whereas his letters on the same subject to his friends condemn Southey in very strong language. Hence one need not doubt the value of the 'Notes', especially when he did not choose to comment upon them while condemning on aesthetic grounds the poem.

In preparing the 'Notes', Shelley drew upon his previous prose writings. For example, "A Letter to Lord Ellenborough" was greatly expanded and used as a note to "I will beget a son", and the note to "There is no God" is a redaction of *The Necessity of*

1. *Letters*, 16 January 1813.
2. *Letters*, 26 June 1820.

Atheism. Similarly in his subsequent writings, he makes use of the 'Notes' as and when it suits his purpose. For instance, in *A Refutation of Deism*, he draws upon the same notes. All these sources, he finally used in the composition of *A Philosophical View of Reform*, his greatest single contribution, apart from the 'Notes', to the social thought of the day. Thus it would not be incorrect to say that the 'Notes' occupy a central position in his teachings.

It may be well to study the correspondence between Owen's and Shelley's system of ideas under various sub-divisions:

1. The Law of Necessity

The first of Owen's *Essays* came out in 1813. It carries the following epigraph:

> **Any general character, from the best to the worst, from the most ignorant to the most enlightened, may be given to any community, even to the world at large, by the application of proper means which meas are to a great extent at the command and under the control of those who have influence in the affairs of men.**

This principle, epitomized as "man's character is formed for, and not, by him", he applied to all the problems of life, and gradually evolved a complete system. Once convinced of the truth of this basic tenet, he did not bother nor did he feel it his task to enter into any philosophical discussion on the freedom of will. The first conclusion that he arrived at was that the character of the poor, formed without any guidance and direction, led them to a course of extreme vice and misery, while most of the well-to-do, educated on mistaken principles, were rendered totally unworthy of rational behaviour. Owen took it for granted that rulers of the world were responsible for this present condition of human society. As against this pessimistic picture, Owen had an optimistic view of the future of man. He claimed that the children could be trained to acquire "any language, sentiments, beliefs, or any bodily habits and manners, not contrary to human nature". He therefore exhorted those in power that instead of punishing crimes which were the logical result of character over which man had no control, it would be far more beneficial to prevent them. It would thus be advisable to provide circumstances that could create motives for good conduct. From such reasoning, he arrived at another conclusion which was "the happiness of self, clearly understood, and uniformly practised; which can only be obtained by conduct that must promote the happiness of the community".[1] He administered a warning to the privileged classes not to hinder the efforts aimed at promoting the well-being of society since their own safety lay in the same. Owen rightly believed that the "millions

1. *Essays*, First.

of the poor, half-naked, half-famished, untaguht, and untrained, hourly increasing to a most alarming extent in these islands[1]" had been cruelly neglected. They could now be transformed into decent citizens by adopting the plan that he suggested for the education and general development of the character of the people. They were to be helped from their infancy to form good habits, and such training would create in them a desire to promote the happiness of every individual, without any consideration of class, creed or colour. With these views, Owen worked out a new system of education both for children and adults that was put into practice at New Lanark.

As we have already seen, Shelley shared this belief with Owen, both of them having derived it from Godwin. The difference lies only in its presentation and exposition. Shelley's discussion of the doctrine of Necessity is at a much higher intellectual level. He remains speculative and theoretical whereas Owen's approach is practical. Shelley said in his note to "Necessity! thou mother of the world!":

> **He who asserts the doctrine of Necessity, means that, contemplating the events which compose the moral and material universe, he beholds only an immense and uninterrupted chain of causes and effects, no one of which could occupy any other place than it does occupy, or acts in any other place than it does act.**

This doctrine of Necessity is complex and subtle. It can, however, quite easily be oversimplified and reduced to absurdity. The will of man was accommodated by the explanatory, but integral clause that "Motive is to voluntary action in the human mind, what cause is to effect in the material universe." It is thus a rational and teleological determinism, with firm faith in the omnipotence of truth. Once it is understood how it explains events, it becomes a very enlightening doctrine. It is perhaps a misnomer like Marx's doctrine of "the Materialist interpretation of History". It was in fact a translation of the whole ethos of the age, consisting in a scientific and, to some extent, even mechanistic interpretation of reality. It thus worked wonders: it led to the adoption of practical measures to ameliorate the condition of the people. Shelley said: "Do you think these motives, which I shall present, are powerful enough to rouse him? is a question just as common as, Do you think this lever has the power of raising this weight?" Both Shelley and Owen deduced that this doctrine cut at the very root of Christianity, a religion based on the erroneous concept of reward and punishment. Utility was the basis of morality, consisting in the greatest happiness of the greatest number. He remarked, "Desert, in the present sense of the word, would no longer have any meaning; and he, who should inflict pain upon another for no better reason than that he deserved it, would only gratify his revenge under

1. *ibid.*

pretence of satisfying justice." Thus it precludes private displeasure or public enmity. Neither does the individual who does wrong deserve any pity nor has the virtuous any justification to feel proud. The present irrational ideas and malpractices were, of course to be condemned. According to Owen, the greatest error lay in the notion that individuals form their own character. Both Shelley and Owen traced this concept to religion which held as one of its fundamental tenets the original sin of man.

Shelley also believed with Owen, as he said in his note to "Necessity! Thou mother of the world"!: "At the same time, the doctrine of Necessity does not in the least diminish our disapprobation of vice". It rather taught that "there is neither good nor evil in the universe, otherwise than as the events to which we apply these epithets have relation to our own peculiar mode of being." Past history has therefore been, according to Shelley, based on erroneous beliefs, it was simply an era of unrelieved darkness. He called it a "record of crimes and miseries."[1] The present was still a continuity of the past in which the same tyranny was being perpetrated. Mankind had thus been deceived. Both Shelley and Owen thought that life is a struggle between darkness and light, tyranny and benevolence, falsehood and truth. It was now for man himself to defeat the forces of evil that had ruled the world so far. Mary Shelley has told us:

> **The prominent feature of Shelley's theory of the destiny of the human species was, that evil is not inherent in the system of the creation, but an accident that might be expelled. . . . Shelley believed that mankind had only to will that there should be no evil, and there would be none. . . . That man could be so perfectionized as to be able to expel evil from his own nature, from the greater part of the creation, was the cardinal point of his system.[2]**

The Owenites expressed the same faith in an editorial in *The New Harmony Gazette* in a more simplified, though allegorical manner: "And God said, 'Let there be light, and there was light;' and the nations of the earth, as with one voice, say, 'We *will* be free, and they *are* free'."[3] So both Shelley and Owen believed in the perfectibility of man. This could be achieved by conquering the existing circumstances of man and with that, would begin the millennium.

2. Religion

Religion was, however, the greatest obstacle to the realization of this ideal. Owen had made it clear in his *Essays*, he had, in fact, made an impassioned plea: "But destroy this hydra of human

1. *Letters* (To Thomas Hookham), 17 December 1812.
2. Mary Shelley's 'note' to *Prometheus Unbound*, 1839 ed.
3. Vol. I. No. 5, 29 Oct 1825.

calamity, this immolator of every principle of rationality, this monster, which hitherto has effectually guarded every avenue that can lead to true benevolence and active kindness and human happiness will be speedily established on a rock from whence it shall never more be removed."[1] Discussing his plan of education, owen observed that some of the most learned members of the Church of England dreaded it as they well know that "reason and inconsistency cannot long exist together; that the one must inevitably destroy the other, and reign paramount." They were, in fact, opposed to the dissemination of knowledge as their efforts to destroy the Lancastrian system showed. Robert Owen advised that with the successful implemetation of a rational, national plan of education, all the errors attached to various religions would be destroyed and only rational principles would live. In his famous lecture making a frontal attack on religion, he said that as long as society continued as such, no reform could take place and even the best parts of Christianity could never be brought into action. The same was most forcefully expressed in the following words:

Then my friends, I tell you, that hitherto you have been prevented from even knowing what happiness really is, solely in consequence of the errors—gross errors—that have been combined with the fundamental notions of every religion that has hitherto been taught to men. And, in consequence, they have made man the most inconsistent and the most miserable being in existence[2].

Religion according to Owen, had infected mankind with dangerous, lamentable principles of disunion, and division, and the consequences had been animosities, fanaticism, hatred and war. By adhering to religion, any longer, only a maniac could hope to look for harmony and happiness in the world. Therefore it would be best to discard this historical anachronism and grant every individual "a full right to the enjoyment of the most unlimited liberty of conscience". He made his position clear in most unequivocal terms, "I am not of your religion, nor of any religion yet taught in the world!— to me they all appear united with much—yes, with very much error!"[3]

In his *Necessity of Atheism* as well as his note to "There is no God", Shelley attempted to prove by logic and deductive reasoning the non-existence of God. He said that a perception of the agreement of the ideas of which a proposition is composed is termed belief. Shelley opposed the common view :

that belief is an act of volition, in consequence of which, it may be regulated by the mind. Pursuing, continuing this mistake, they have attached a degree of criminality to disbelief, of which, in its nature, it is incapable" it is equally incapable of merit.... Belief, then is a passion,.... belief is not an act of volition.

1. *Essays*, Fourth.
2. *A New View of Society and Other Writings.* *Address*, 21 August 1817.
3. *ibid.*

The same view was held by Owen. Shelley put it emphatically at the beginning of the note to "There is no God" that "This negation must be understood solely to affect a creative Deity. The hypothesis of a pervading spirit coeternal with the universe, remains unshaken." Such was Owen's belief in the spiritual world. Shelley deals at length with Christianity in his note to "I will beget a son", in which he criticizes in very strong language the teachings of the Bible, which is put at a very early age in the hands of children. Thus their minds in their very infancy are stamped with the stories of the creation of the world, the original sin, and the redemption of mankind by Jesus Christ. Mankind had thus been coerced into the belief that the crucifixion of Christ was a supernatural event and those who disbelieved it had to pay with their life. Such heresies were valued in terms of long-drawn out tortures in the darkest and gloomiest cells. A public display of the heretic burning in the flames of the inquisition was, in Shelley's view, more for the benefit of the believers than for the soul of the apostate. In actual fact, the Church persecuted others in the name of one who had himself been persecuted for Truth; the sacrifice of Christ had created a new and worse tyranny: "The bloodshed by the votaries of the God of mercy and peace, since the establishment of His religion, would probably suffice to drown all other sectaries now on the habitable globe."

Shelley also discusses in his note to "There is no God",[1] the evolution of the concept of God. He sees this as starting from the grossest material objects which primitive man raised to the status of deities, ultimately arriving at the personal God of Christianity. It is the restless imagination of man always labouring to form chimeras, which will torment him until a knowledge of nature shall dissipate the phantoms which he has always so vainly adored. The generality of mankind attributes the most simple events, whose causes are well known to the enlightened, to the Deity. Thus "It was upon the ruins of nature that men first raised the imaginary colossus of a Deity." Hence it had to be destroyed by the promotion of knowledge of nature. Till all human beings are sufficiently educated, they will cut each other's throats for the sake of their God as in the past. In fact at the root of this contention lies man's vanity which is itself a product of the malorganization of society. Therefore Shelley asks, "When will the vulgar learn humility?" and wonders "IF HE HAS SPOKEN? WHY IS NOT THE UNIVERSE CONVINCED? IF the knowledge of a God is the most necessary, why is it not the clearest and most evident?"

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1. The argument of this paragraph is based on Shelley's long excerpt from *Systeme de la Nature* in his note to "There is no God". The translation used is that which appeared in Clark's pirated edition of *Queen Mab*. The quotations in this paragraph are from the name translation.

Robert Owen reiterated his views on religion in his later writings. He launched his most furious attack on Christianity and priesthood in *The Book of The New Moral World* (1836). The priesthood of the world had created an artificial and unnatural system that worked contrary to the happiness of man. Under their reign the creation of a good society had become impossible since it would be based on truth, charity and love. The following short quotation will bring out the bitterness of his tone:

> **The errors which have created the Priesthood, and the errors which the Priesthood have created, through their long reign of mystery, falsehood, and absurdities, have made the human race so artificial and irrational, that they now imagine it will be impossible that man can ever become truthful, virtuous, and happy. And they say these evils must ever exist, because "man is bad by nature".**[1]

Owen suggested that all works of theology be burnt so that the world could be reconstructed on the basis of rational knowledge. Shelley also, in his own way, lived and died for the same ideals.

3. The New Socio-economic System.

Robert Owen analysed the political and moral efforts of the manufacturing system in *Observations on the Effect of the Manufacturing System* (1815) and *The Address to the British Master Manufacturers* (1819) as well as his other writings of this period. The new conditions were creating a new character in the workers and unless they were counteracted by legislative measures, their pernicious effects would establish most lamentable and permanent evils. Their obvious effects were an anxiety for riches and injurious luxuries for those who regarded manufacture as a source of wealth for themselves, and an escape into the seductive pleasures of the pot-house and inebriation for the operatives, both male and female. "To succeed in this career, the industry of the lower orders, from whose labour this wealth is now drawn, has been carried by new competitors striving against those of longer standing to a point of real oppression."[2] All were sedulously trained, in Owen's view, to buy cheap and sell dear. Consequently the workers were in a "situation infinitely more degraded and miserable than they were before the introduction of the manufactories, upon the success of which their bare subsistance now depends."[3] The worst fate was that of the children. They were put to work in the factories from the age of five or six, working even eighteen hours a day, receiving a good deal of beating and festering wounds into the bargain. They could neither develop a robust constitution nor acquire character and a useful knowledge of domestic life. They were not only reduced to starvation and nakedness, but also deprived

1. *The Book of the New Moral World*, Part Three,Chapter VIII.
2. *Observations on the Effect of the Manufacturing System.*
3. *ibid.*

of rational and healthy amusements, The result was a general vacuity of mind that led them to dissipation and degradation. Everybody was rushing at a "mail-coach-speed" "only to steel the heart of man against his fellows, or to form the tyrant and the slave."[1] According to Owen, this process had set up a system of hostility between the employer and the employee; all social ties had been cast aside and all were driven by the immediate idea of gain. The employer regarded the employed as a mere instrument of profit, thus acquiring character whose distinguishing feature was ferocious exploitation. However oppressed, on the other hand, the workers might be, if judicious legislative measures were not devised, the country was likely to be plunged into a blood-bath, which may perhaps be worse than the French Revolution.

In his *The Employment of Children in the Manufactories.* Owen emphatically put across what he had already said in the Manufacturing System.

Yet it is from this class the wealthy derive all which they hold. The rich wallow in an excess of luxuries injurious to themselves solely by the labour of men who are debarred from acquiring for their own use a sufficiency even of the indispensible articles of life, much less any of those numberless comforts which they see around them.

He goes on to argue that higher wages will raise the prices of the goods only by a fraction of a penny per pound which was not a big price to pay for the well-being of the largest section of the society. This price would have to be paid not by the manufacturer but by the consumer; it was ridiculously small, compared to the alarming rise and fall in prices brought about by the speculators. Besides, the purchasing power of the operatives would contribute to the gains of the manufacturers themselves. Owen told them that by their short-sighted practices, "You cut up your prosperity by the root, and most effectually kill the goose from which you would otherwise daily receive the golden egg."[2] Therefore it was necessary that mechanism must be rendered subservient to human labour.

This line of thinking resulted in the plan that Owen submitted as *Report of the Committee for the Relief of the Manufacturing Poor* (1817). It comprised Villages of Unity and Mutual Co-operation on the basis of common labour and shared expenses. This was to unite men in the common pursuit of common objects for their mutual benefits, "as well as to prevent the afflicting spectacle of thousands pining in want amidst a superabundance of means." He suggested that all this was to be achieved without violence, by a peaceful revolution, without "violently or prematurely interfering with the existing institutions of society." Owen believed

1. op. cit.
2. *To The British Master Manufacturers* (1819).

that once this experiment was a success, such societies would spread in the country, thus automatically invalidating the old economic system. It was the principle of socialization from above. He went so far as to discuss the problems of incentive to work and the dangers of creating a drab uniformity that a socialist society has to meet. So convinced was he of success that he urged: "The change from the OLD to the NEW must become universal. To resist the introduction of this plan, in any part of the world, will *now* be as vain and useless, as for any man by his puny efforts to endeavour to preclude from the earth the vivifying rays of the sun."[1] This was epitomized in the form of the following maxim: "Old things will pass away, and all shall become new." This plan took its final form in his *Report to the Country of the New Lanark* (1820) in which he struck at the root of the problem, in that "Money is at the root of all evil". The natural standard of value was to be human labour, manual or mental or both : "Its value in every article of produce was to be ascertained, and its exchangeable value with all other values fixed accordingly." Human labour was thus to be free from being "a perpetually varying article of commerce"; cash payments were to be dispensed with. It could then be practically demonstrated that "Labour is the foundation of all values." The object of such a society is "to obtain wealth, and to enjoy it" by living in establishments that in their description resemble the communes to which today the Communist World looks forward.

Such were also Shelley's views, at least, in their general outline. He did not present any detailed socio-economic system, nor could it have been expected of him. As regards the analysis of the then economic system and the creation of a new one he comes out in agreement with what Owen stood for. In *A Philosophical View of Reform* (1820), he described in detail the miserable and wretched condition of the poor operatives and their children who had been turned into "lifeless and bloodless machines at an age when otherwise they would be at play before the cottage doors of their parents; to augment indefinitely the proportion of those who enjoy the profit of labour of others as compared with those who exercised this labour." A new aristocracy had thus come into power whose existence was an anamoly in the social structure of the country. Shelley had only unqualified contempt for them since their very existence was parasitic; like drones they lived on the labour of the workers. Only their termination could be of any benefit to the society. Therefore in cases of emergency and need and in the interest of equalisation of society, the government is fully justified in appropriating that property. Since "Equality in possessions must be the last result of the utmost refinements of civilization; it is

1. *Further Development of the Plan for the Relief of the Poor and the Emancipation of Mankind* (1817).

one of the conditions of that system of society towards which with whatever hope of ultimate success, it is our duty to tend."

These views had also strongly been stated in his note to "And statesmen boast Of wealth?" "There is no real wealth but the labour of man", but the landlord, the capitalist, and all the royalty, with the sanction of the clergy had exploited man to such an extent that he was for more miserable than the meanest savage. The social values were so much distorted that the arts of the jeweller, the toyman, and the actor were assessed at a far higher value than that of the cultivator of land "without whom society must cease to exist". In Shelley's view, to preach at this stage that all men are equal was only an insult to common sense. A wanton extravagance of human labour for the egotism and ostentation of the few was nothing but the "result of a conspiracy of the few against the many, who are themselves obliged to purchase this pre-eminence by the loss of all real comfort". So by an equitable distribution of wealth and leisure, society could be built on a new basis, which would ensure for its members not only a sound physique and active mind, but also enlightenment and culture.

When Malthus published *An Essay on Population* (1798), the radical thinkers were infuriated and they, with one voice, condemned it as a most vicious class dogma that had been put forward during the recent years. The recommendation of the Reverend Malthus that the working classes should lead a life of celibacy or marry at the pain of starvation, was no doubt a culmination of the capitalist thinking that had deprived the proletariat even of the necessities of life. Shelley criticized Malthusian proposals in strong language in *An Association of Philanthropists* (1812). He asked why the rich should be allowed to glut and the poor be made to pay with their blood "for the crimes and mistakes which the hereditary monopolists of earth commit?" He observed in *A Philosophical View of Reform* that the proposals, if they could be put into practice, should equally apply to all classes.

Robert Dale Owen wrote *Moral Physiology* to counteract the evils created by the Malthusian proposals, by suggesting contraceptive measures. Robert Owen maintained, though approving the methods suggested by his son, that one labourer could produce sufficient food for six persons, and if proper means of agriculture were adopted to cultivate all the available land and regulate the laws of supply and demand, there could be no threat of the surplus population of the world starving to death just for lack of food. Therefore he remarked that the Malthusian position was most fallacious in that "population has a tendency to increase geometrically while food can be increased only arithemetically." So it was Malthus who had filled the mind of the public with "these mental abortions",

and "The most lamentable fact is, that those who now govern society are content with these crude notions of Mr. Malthus".[1] This is how Owen looked at the matter, in consonance with the views of all the radical thinkers.

Similarly both Owen and Shelley regarded the military profession as quite despicable, since war, in their view, had always been waged in the interest of the ruling class. In Shelley's opinion, "There is a secret sympathy between destruction and power, between monarchy and war."[2] History bears out the fact that the monarchs and the military leaders had always successfully played into each other's hands. Shelley regarded soldiers as despicable since they acted like puppets in a showman's hands. They also made an automatic display of dogmatism and swagger; the very pageantry of arms and badges corrupted their imagination. In Owen's view, the military was one of "the Satanic institutions" that the kings and the preists had created in the world to perpetrate tyranny over the common people. It was the characteristic of the military to foster a war-like spirit and a desire for war; and in doing so, they only served their own interests. He thought that standing armies had always caused hostility among individuals and nations, and so long as they were not disbanded, it would not be possible to usher in an era of peace and prosperity when "swords shall be turned into ploughshares and spears into pruning-hooks."[3]

War would be an anachronism in the millennium that Owen and Shelley were striving for. There would be no classes in the new social system and hence no vested interests to serve; feuds and wars, therefore, will become things of the past. So the new social order, as we have seen above, will ensure for man not only peace and prosperity but also enlightenment and culture.

4. Love and Marriage

We have seen in Chapter I how Owen approvingly quoted Shelley in his lectures on *The Marriage System of the New Moral World*, and how he came to be identified with Shelley in the public eye. His immediate source for his views on love and marriage, if not the only source in the absence of any other evidence, was Shelley's note to "Even love is sold." Therefore, so far as their views on love and marriage are concerned, it is not difficult to find an extremely close correspondence between them.

Both Shelley and Owen were of the view that the marriage system devised by the priests, aimed at human misery. Shelley

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1. *A Developement (Sic) of the Principles and Plans on which to establish Self-supporting Home Colonies*, 1841, p. 17.
2. *A Philosophical View of Reform.*
3. op. cit.

thought that "A system could not well have been devised more studiously hostile to human happiness than marriage." Owen regarded it as one of "The Satanic institutions" that the ruling classes had created in the world for the exploitation of the poor. According to them, it was an immoral system since the choice of the spouse was made by parents and not by the parties themselves; and in the exercise of this choice, most of the parents were swayed by worldly considerations. Thus the marriage contract was often a business deal, which could become sordid at times. After their marriage, a man and woman were required to remain faithful to each other, irrespective of the fact whether their union was conducive to their mutual happiness or not. Their marriage, which was a vow of constancy, was, in fact, a plunge into the dark. Since separation was out of the question, an unhappily married couple was bound to suffer for the rest of their life. Shelley therefore held the view that "A husband and wife ought to continue so long united as they love each other: any law which should bind them to cohabitation for one moment after the decay of their affection would be a most intolerable tyranny, and the most unworthy of toleration." In Shelley's opinion, the happiness of the couple was the measure of a successful marriage. Constancy in marriage as such was not virtuous nor, for that matter, was separation immoral. Shelley almost went to the other extreme when he said: "Love is free: to promise for ever to love the same woman, is not less absurd than to promise to believe the same creed: such a vow, in both cases, excludes us from all enquiry". Since happiness and morality had become synonymous in both Shelley's and Owen's system of ideas, the old system of marriage had to be discarded. Owen exhorted his audience in his very first lecture: "And that until you put away from among you and your children for ever, this accursed thing, you will never be in a condition to become chaste or virtuous in your thought and feelings, or to know what real happiness is."

Shelley believed that "Prostitution is the legitimate offspring of marriage and its accompanying errors." Quite many people, because of their unsatisfactory married life, resorted to prostitution. Not only married persons but young bachelors also frequently visited the prostitutes, since social intercourse between the male and female was not permitted. In Shelley's opinion, the fanatical idea of chastity was the root cause of all this trouble. Such members of the female sex, as were unwise and unfortunate to follow the dictates of a natural appetite, were cast out of the society; this created a class of women who were condemned to a life of untold suffering and misery. But in doing this, society only acted against its own interests. This vitiated human nature itself; this annihilated genuine passion and thus made monsters of people who would otherwise be sincere and devoted. Owen said in his very first lecture that the marriage system itself was "the sole cause of all prostitution, of all its incalculable grievous evils, and of more than half of all the vilest

and most degrading crimes known to society." So the marriage system, on the one hand, yoked unwilling partners to each other and, on the other, encouraged prostitution thus making the large majority of the people hypocritical and miserable. Owen came to the conclusion (and in this he preceded Havelock Ellis), the conclusion to which Shelley's note "Even love is sold" also led, that more prostitution was practised inside marriage than outside it. In Owen's view, almost all married pairs, with very few exceptions, were living in "the grossest prostitution of body and mind". Shelley struck at the root of the matter when he said:

Chastity is a mankish and evangelical superstition, a greater foe to natural temperance even than unintellectual sensuality; it strikes at the root of all domestic happiness, and consigns more than half of the human race to misery, that some few may monopolize according to law."

Both Shelley and Owen wanted to free love from constraint and create such social conditions as would enable people to make an independent choice of partners. This choice would be determined by their mutual love which would naturally have a basis in their mental and moral qualities. In his fourth lecture, Owen put this idea in the following manner:—

But these unions of the sexes, devised by the priests, still further tend to increase the inequality of wealth in society, by creating motives for wealth to unite in marriage with wealth and for wealth thus to become the general law of union between the sexes, instead of affection and stability of the physical and mental qualities of the parties.

Both Shelley and Owen also wanted the society to introduce a legal measure, granting the right of divorce to the people. Both of them thought that the religion and morality had created a practical code of misery and servitude. The impossibility of the dissolution of marriage, as we have seen above, made people perverse and hypocritical; it enabled the male to tyrannize over the female, who could not seek redress from any quarter. Therefore, both Owen and Shelley wanted a new, enlightened system of marriage to be introduced in place of the old which had become obsolete. It may here be pointed out that they were not favouring promiscuity in sexual relations. They believed that the new system would make people chaste and moral. Shelley maintained that from the abolition of marriage, a fit and natural arrangement of sexual connection would result. But it was Owen who gave a practical shape to this idea.

Briefly Owen's plan was this: if a man and a woman decided to marry, they were to declare their intention at a regular public meeting. They were then required to live for a period of three months together, at the expiry of which they were to make another public declaration which would constitute marriage. As regards divorce, the parties

were to make a public declaration to that effect, they were then required to return and live for a period of six months more, at the expiry of which, if they still found that it was incompatible with their mutual happiness, the second public declaration would amount to a divorce. If, however, one of them still did not agree to the dissolution of marriage, they were further required to return and live together for another six months, at the end of which period, a public declaration now even from one would dissolve the marriage. In Shelley's words, "That which will result from the abolition of marriage, will be natural and right, because choice and change will be exempted from restraint".

5. The Political Method.

How was this millennium to be achieved? Both Shelley and Owen advocated peaceful methods. It was to be a moral revolution since politics for both of them was a science of morals. This change was to be slow and imperceptible, not violent and sudden. Once the character of man was formed, the new conditions were assured; and by the logic of the law of Necessity, there would be no room left for evil. Henceforth it will be an era of good, sweetness and light; man will be good, wise and mild as Shelley had himself hoped to be. It was his creed to be meek and bold. But he also favoured revolution and the use of force as the final alternative. *A Declaration of Rights* ended in the line: "Awake! — arise!— or be forever fallen."

He was all the time issuing warnings that if the conditions did not improve, the result would be a blood-bath worse than the French Revolution. "But the change should commence among the higher orders, or anarchy will only be the last flash before despotism."[1] As his writings and letters reveal, although he advocated the destruction of the existing system and the reconstruction of the society on an entirely new basis, he would have accepted gradual changes, provided they were introduced with a view to ultimately creating a just society, in terms of the new thought of which Shelley himself was a champion. But as we know Shelley justified the use of force as a last resort. He said in *An Address to the Irish People*, "Many circumstances, I will own, may excuse what is called rebellion". Shelley believed that people alone could change their own condition. He therefore in the same address explained his point of view in the following words: "But I do not merely wish, to convince you that our present state is bad, but that its alteration for the better, depends on your own exertions and resolutions."

In *A Philosophical View of Reform*, Shelley discussed this matter at length and found rational justification for the use of force

1. *Letters* (To T. L. Peacock) 22 August 1819.

and violence by the common people to overthrow a tyrannical government. People derived their right of insurrection from the employment of armed forces by the government to counteract the will of the nation. If the government could disband the standing army, matters would then, of course, be decided through peaceful negotiations. However, since this was not possible, Shelley upheld the use of force in special circumstances. "When the majority in any nation arrive at a conviction that it is their duty and their interest to divest the minority of a power employed to their disadvantage, and the minority are sufficiently mistaken as to believe that their superiority is tenable, a struggle must ensue."

As we know, Owen never came to this conclusion himself, although he was all his life administering stern warnings as to the consequences of stubbornness on the part of the ruling classes. For four years, almost despite himself, he was the head of the first British proletariat movement. He exhorted the working classes to attain virtue and wisdom before they attempted to wield power. Since the classes and class-hatred were the result of circumstances, none could be blamed. It was only folly to blame others ; it was only a useless contest. Moreover Owen declared, "these changes are at hand for the crisis has arrived, now in the history of mankind". His *An Address to the Working Classes* (1819) was a strong and reasoned exhortation against class-war. When all would havr learned the truth, the past folly and irrationality would disappeae and the millennium would set in. Thenceforth people will have one and only one interest. In such pronouncements, Owen becomes visionary and romantic. His passionate flights could be matched against those of Shelley who never chose to soar in his prose, though in his poetry this was at once his strength and weakness. The last chorus of *Hellas* well represents this shared dream of both the reformers:

The world's great age begins anew,
The golden years return,
The earth doth like a snake renew
Her winter weeds outworn:
Heaven smiles, and faith and empires gleam,
Like wrecks of a dissolving dream.

The question whether revolution could be brought about by peaceful methods led both Robert Owen and Shelley to analyse the ideals, methods and the failure of the French Revolution. They regarded it as a great event in the history of mankind though they disapproved of the violence it entailed. It had translated the aspirations of mankind into action. In a note on "Godwin, Paley, and Malthus", it is taken as not only the force behind the ideas of Godwin and Paine, but also the romantic literature of Wordsworth, Coleridge and Southey:

Upon the other hand, Godwin, as a writer, was formed by that great impusle to which only the Protestant Reformation is to be compared—an impulse which gave

intellect a start forwards throughout the whole world—the French Revolution which was a revoluuon in mind as well as in politics—which created a Paine among political writers, was the original power (whatever their subsequent opinions) of a Wordsworth, a Coleridge and a Southey; which made Holcroft the masterly delineator of fictitious character and to which we are probably indebted in no small degree for the songs of Burns and the essays of Hazlitt.[1]

Bobert Dale Owen analysed in an article[2] the failure of the French Revolution. He showed that the revolting cruelties that marked the outbreak of the revolution were, in fact, the result of British machination. He quoted from the *Westminster Review* to show how the British government supplied an unlimited amount of money, plans, agents, live metals, and phosphorescent articles for the use of the opponents of the revolution. They also sent priests and women in disguise, who indulged in assassination and murder in a very neat and prudent manner. No doubt, he admitted the faults of the revolutionaries, but their excesses were too readily exploited by their adversaries. They exaggerated the atrocities to such a point that fears of the European nations were excited and the revolution was presented as a great threat to the life and liberty of the peoples of Europe. Robert Dale Owen quoted on the authority of General Lafayette that emissaries were sent from Britain and other countries "to fan the flame of extravagance, and to push the most reckless and violent among the revolutionary democrats to unheard of acts of injustice, and cruelty." Therefore this great political event had been most grossly misrepresented. In actual fact, as he remarked in the same article, it was a noblest effort, ever made by humanity, for creating a just society. It was a rare display of the powers of truth and justice. In his opinion, "Never, perhaps, was there a public body at once more daring, more honest, and more moderate, than the National Assembly of 1879; nor never, probably, did a political party exhibit more sincere devotion to a good cause, than did the brave and ill-fated Girondists."

In *An Association of Philanthropists*, Shelley argues that the French Encyclopaedists were greatly responsible for creating a climate of opinion that brought about the French Revolution. The French nation had been insulted and humiliated by "a succession of oligarchies, each more bloodthirsty and urelenting than the foregoing." Therefore when it got an opportunity, it gave vent to its indignation and wrath on the tyrants in an extremely excessive manner. This only proved that the principles of philanthropy and freedom were not really understood. He continued his argument by criticizing some of the Encyclopaedists: Voltaire was prone to flattering the kings; Rousseau gave licence to indulgence in passion; Helvetius and Condorcet drew conclusions that were not clear and systematical. But, on the whole, their teachings and the Revolution itself had made

1. *The New Moral World*, Vol. VI (New Series), No. 2, 6 July 1844.
2. *Popular Tracts*, 1830, (No. 9, "The French Revolution").

a great contribution to the cause of humanity. According to him, "In the Revolution of France were engaged men whose names are inerasible from the records of Liberty." Shelley maintained these views till the end of his life and reiterated them in *A Philosophical View of Reform.*

The same line of thinking is taken to analyse the violence that accompanied the Revolution in the Preface to *The Revolt of Islam.* Shelley's aim in doing this was to dispel the gloom that had entered into the hearts of the people and consequently into the contemporary literature. The Revolution had to be studied in an objective manner so that its ideals, and even the bloody struggle itself, despite its failure, could serve as a beacon light to the English people for the achievement of higher and rational state of society. Seen in a proper light, it could provide the much needed inspiration. The failure of the French Revolution was caused by a lack of real correspondence between the knowledge and the action of the revolutionaries: "the sanguine eagerness for good overleapt the solution of these questions, and for a time extinguished itself in the unexpectedness of their result. Thus many of the most ardent and tender-hearted of the worshippers of the public good, have been morally ruined". Shelley made efforts to counteract this effect. He, no doubt, had in mind the ideals, the struggle, and the failure of the French Revolution while conceiving of *The Revolt of Islam.* It welded into the imaginative apprehension of the theme, and the allegorical form that he evolved, to give expression to "the cause of a liberal and comprehensive morality". Laon and Cythna successfully revolted against the tyranny of Othman and the Iberian priest, achieving the sort of society they had wished for, which is represented by V. Song. 3, beginning with this line, " Eldest of things, divine Equality!" But soon the counter-revolutionaries overthrew the forces of liberty and progress, and the cause of humanity suffered a serious set-back. What Shelley said in prose is then put in the garb of poetry. The good that the revolutionaries did lives after their death; it inspires the future generations and keeps the torch of Liberty alive:

> **The good and mighty of departed ages**
> **Are in their graves, the innocent and free,**
> **Heroes, and poets, and prevailing Sages,**
> **Who leave the vesture of their majesty**
> **To adorn and clothe this naked world;— and we**
> **Are like to them—such perish, but they leave**
> **All hope, or love, or truth, or liberty,**
> **Whose forms their mighty spirits could conceive**
> **To be a rule and law to ages that survive.**
> **(IX. xxviii).**

6. The Structure of the New State.

When the Owenite millennium sets in, the state will, of course, wither away. It is only an unnecessary evil, an anomaly, and

a mistake. Then to govern will not be a privilege but a pleasure; a responsibility for the performance of which human beings will be actuated by noble motives. The conception of government then will not exist. Besides, there will be no special class to govern, each will be governing as well as being governed. Owen imagined that "as the parties who will govern in a few years become the governed, they must always be conscious that at a future period they will be experiencing the good or evil effects of the measures of their administration."[1] Shelley also held the same views: government is a necessary evil which has to exist till a just society is created; it will of itself decay when people have become good and wise. He rightly believed, if we keep his times in view, that "Society is produced by the wants, government by the wickedness, and a state of just and happy equality by the improvement and reason of man."[2] The pervading spirit of this millennium, in all its detail, is best communicated by Shelley in the last two Acts of *Prometheus Unbound.*

1. *Report to the County of New Lanark.*
2. *An Address to the Irish People.*

CHAPTER 3

THE OWENITE VIEW OF LITERATURE

All the Owenite journals had only one aim before them and that was the exposition and propagation of the Owenite system. In practice, this meant not only an explanation of the various aspects of the system, but also a perpetual polemical war against its critics and censors. Naturally it led them to take stock of all the current social activities as well as find support and strength in every possible quarter. Hence they could not afford to ignore literary activity. At the very outset, Owen had realized that literature represents the noble aspirations and ideals of man. One of his life-long claims was that he had given a practical formulation to the dreams and visions of poets and philosophers. He was fully conscious of the value and function of literature. This is clearly borne out by his admiration of and indebtedness to Shelley. He also looked with favour on some other writers who included Byron, Carlyle and Dickens. He appears to have conceived very early the notion that literature was basically concerned with, and could be used to propagate, ideas. Therefore it was in the fitness of things that the Owenite journals should devote a column to literature. It must, however, be pointed out that it was not always restricted to the review of literary works, but also included those of science and philosophy. Besides this column, they sometimes published special critical articles such as those on Shelley. Invariably, each number included selected pieces not only from contemporary poets from Wordsworth down to Thomes Hood and novelists and story-writers like Maria Edgeworth and Eliza Lynn, but also extracts from such classical poets as Chaucer, Shakespeare, Pope and Gray. These selections showed no bias, they used every resource that easily came their way. It was, however, in the review of current literature that a definite point of view emerges. The Owenite journals did not publish a literary manifesto, their views on various problems and aspects of literature were scattered throughout these reviews. A mention may here be made of one or two short, incomplete articles by Robert Dale Owen. The Owenite point of view was further revealed by the reproduction of certain articles from the contemporary periodicals. Usually these deal with some

literary problems. Thus it is from these gleanings and selections that I propose to build up a systematic Owenite point of view on literature. As is clear, it is not the view of one single man, but of all those Owenites who chose to put their opinions forward while engaged in the service of their system. Happily, in these reviews and reprinted articles, there are, on the whole, no contradictions of the basic point of view. Its strength and clarity are demonstrated by the fact that the literary Owenites wrote poems which accorded with their critical principles. It is also my purpose in this chapter to bring out the agreement of this Owenite critical view with that held by Shelley.

The first and last impression one gets from these scattered opinions is that the Owenites looked upon literature as an instrument of propaganda. The first indication of this propagandist view is found in *The Economist*. The correspondent, 'INVESTIGATOR' wrote a rebuttal of an article published in *The Scotsman* of 12 May, 1821. This article had tried to show that "Mr. Owen's pretended experiment was no experiment at all". The 'INVESTIGATOR' chose this occasion to advise the journal: "You must employ ridicule as well as argument,— laughter as well as exhortation, —poetry as well as philosophy,—*pushing* as well *persuasion*,—before you can hope to lead or drive their mulish inclinations into the regions of nature and truth."[1] He had also enlisted the support of Robert Burns to prove his point. He said that the poet was quick to perceive that man is a victim of circumstances over which he has no control, and in his view his poem, "Ruin's Ploughshare" amply illustrated it. Burns had sketched "the real good and ill" of human society, prophesying that the time was coming when "the wicked shall cease from troubling, and the weary shall be at rest."[2] In his view, Burns, had he been alive, would have hailed Owen's system.

Robert Dale Owen, in an article entitled "Works of Imagination", discussed the question that literature could be used for good as well as for evil purposes. In his view, the priests and romance writers had often turned it into one of the chief sources of evil. As young people eagerly devour tales and such like works, he saw literature as a great instrument for influencing them. He also emphasized the value of nursery tales, quoting the following, which he hesitatingly ascribed to William Pitt, to support his point: "Let me have the writing of a nation's nursery ballads, and I care not who has the framing of its laws."[3] This was giving

1. No. 22, 23 June 1821.
2. No. 21, 16 June 1821.
3. *The Free Inquirer*, Vol. III. No. 35, 25 June 1831.
[This is a quotation from Andrew Fletcher's *Letter to the Marquis of Montrose, and Others*. It appears on p. 372 of his *Political Works*, 1737 ed., and correctly reads as: "I knew a very wise man so much of Sir Chr-'s sentiment, that he believed if a man were permitted to make all the ballads, he need not care who should make the laws of a nation."]

a definite direction to literature, investing it with a moral purpose or a propagandist slant. In the same number, he published Maria Edgeworth's "The Modern Griselda" as a specimen illustrating his point of view.

The New Moral World reprinted an article from the *Leicester Chronicle* entitled "The Leading Authors of the Day (Advocates of Socialism)" by 'Philo Vertas',[1] which had unwittingly served the socialist cause while opposing it. It had pointed out the "insidious mode by which these dangerous doctrines are spread through our current literature, particularly in works of fiction and entertainment". The authors listed were, as 'Philo Veritas' had remarked, very popular living authors whose works were in great demand. They had "in several direct and unequivocal forms, betrayed decided conformity of sentiment with Mr. Owen and his disciples, viz: Lord Brougham, Sir E. L. Bulwer, Dr. Southey, Miss Martineau, Miss Landon, Mrs. L. Grimstone, Mr. and Mrs. J.C. London, etc. etc." This was an objective opinion *for* the Owenites, establishing the fact that they had come a long way in their efforts at influencing creative activity. From trying to spread the doctrine of the moral function and propaganda value of literature, they had now actually succeeded in putting the younger generation of writers on the right lines. The example set by Shelley had now become a tradition. "To aid in accomplishing this glorious change is indeed a high vocation", thus urged the Owenites in an article entitled "Socialism in France."[2]

The Owenites also provided their readers, as well as the younger generation of writers with examples of devotion and sacrifice with a view to inspiring them to undertake such activity. It well accorded with their peaceful mission, since once the imagination of the people was fired with the zeal to bring about the new moral world, revolutionary activity could be dispensed with. Besides Shelley, they had writers from the continent who had actively taken the side of the down-trodden. They believed, as they wrote in "Quetelet of Man", that "CONTINENTAL works of Literature, when compared with those of our own island, are distinguished by their excellence in method, breadth of fact, and fearlessness of conclusion."[3] John Goodwyn Barmby, an extremely zealous Owenite, emphasized this point in his series of articles entitled "The Past, The Present, and The Future of the Stage." He drew attention to the role of the German poet, Theodore Korner, who as a youth had inspired the students to rise for their fatherland and himself had fallen in the battlefield. He also quoted some lines from the war song which had made heroes of the ordinary people:

1. Vol. IV. No. 203, 15 September 1838.
2. op. cit. Vol. VI (New Series). No. 49, 28 September 1839.
3. op. cit. Vol. XII. No. 5, 29 July 1843.

"Still, still, be kind! the German flag is flying
O'er Freedom's camp high in my fatherland
And holy, voices of our dead are crying—
'Ye Poets, up! for German freedom stand'.
The bold heart asks no more but glad replying,
Hears battle's raging music—storm at hand:
***The lyre is mute,*—the naked swords are ringing —**
Come out, my sword, thou mayst thy song be singing."[1]

In the "Foreign News" column of *The New Moral World*, appeared a long report, entitled "Rapid Progress of Communism in Germany", and an abridged translation of "Weaver's Song" by Heine, contributed by "An old friend of Yours in Germany". This old friend, we come to know from Gustav Mayer, was Engels.[2] The report invited attention to a painting by Hubner, "one of the best German painters". It had "made a more effectual socialist agitation than a hundred pamphlets might have done. It represents some Silesian weavers bringing linen cloth to the manufacturer, and contrasts very strikingly cold-hearted wealth on one side, and despairing poverty on the other."[3] The report also showed great pleasure on the conversion of Charles Lessing to Socialism—a great triumph indeed, for the cause. It also gave a list of "the most active literary characters among the German Socialists". Marx's name appears at the head of it, and it includes the names of Frederick Engels and Henry Heine. Heine, who was regarded as "the most eminent of all living German poets", had published a volume of political poetry which contained some pieces that preached Socialism. The most celebrated of them was "Song of the Silesian Weavers". Engels admitted that he was presenting only a prosaic translation, yet he hoped that it might convey to the readers, to some extent at least, the fire and passion with which the poet had invested it. It is as follows:

Without a tear in their grim eyes,
They sit at the loom, the rage of despair in their faces;
"We have suffered and hunger'd long enough;
Old Germany, we are weaving a shroud for thee
And weaving it with a triple curse.
"We are weaving, weaving!

The first curse to the God, the blind and deaf God,
Upon whom we relied, as children on their father;
In whom we hoped and trusted withal,
He has mocked us, he has cheated us nevertheless.
"We are weaving, weaving!

The second curse for the King of the rich,
Whom our distress could not soften nor touch;
The King, who extorts the last penny from us,
And sends his soldiers, to shoot us like dogs.
"We are weaving, weaving!

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1. *ibid.* Vol. I (Third Enlarged Series), No. 24, 12 December 1840.
2. *Fredrich Engels*, p. 23.
3. op. cit. Vol. XIII, No. 25, 13 December 1844.

"A curse to the false fatherland,
That has nothing for us but distress and shame,
Where we suffered hunger and misery—
We are weaving thy shroud Old Germany'
"We are weaving, weaving!

It might not thus be incorrect to say that the Owenite zeal for propaganda coupled with their belief that good literature had always voiced the noblest feelings of mankind, determined their attitude towards literature, and, in fact, all arts. First and foremost it is an instrument dedicated to the service of a noble cause, in this case, Socialism.

Shelley, as we have seen, had started from this position but had amended it fairly soon. Apart from other reasons, one of which was his early realization that he could not take an active part in the radical movemet, he had his loyalty to the art form. It need not conflict with his ideals and convictions, but it may create certain artistic problems for the writer. Though he never for a moment felt in any way less committed to the cause, he in fact veered away from his original position. Poems like *The Triumph of Life*, *The Witch of Atlas* and *Epipsychidion* are of an entirely different nature; they satisfied some other aspects of his life—what is called his Platonism, his other-worldliness, his habit of soaring above this world. But the fact remains that at every period of his life, he was writing political poetry. Mary Shelley said, in her "Note to Poems of 1819", that the few political poems that Shelley had written were not "among the best of his productions", but "he had meant to adorn the cause he loved with loftier poetry of glory and triumph."[1] Continuing this argument, one might add that this triumph and glory were no doubt achieved in *Prometheus Unbound*. It is the most comprehensive expression of his mind and personality in a semi-dramatic form, accommodated to the lyrical mode of expression. It was in this poem that he found an answer to his creative needs. Here, in one poem, all of them were wrought into a beautiful unity to which all the elements that are found in his various poems contributed in the best possible manner. In the central pattern are embedded the socio-political motif and the theme of Platonic love together with passionate but ethereal lyricism. These are moulded into a dramatic form that was needed for the presentation of the conflict of ideas and passions, which take the place of human beings of flesh and blood in every day life. This is what his genius could do at its best.

Perhaps it was because of his search for this final pattern that Shelley started amending his critical position vis-a-vis his poetry. May be he fell short of his own critical canons, but it is not my purpose here to go into the question of the correspondence between

1. *The Poetical Works of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, 2nd ed. 1839.

his critical theory and poetic practice. It may, however, be pointed out that in a letter to Thomas Love Peacock, he wrote, "I consider poetry very subordinate to moral and political science."[1] While writing to Leigh Hunt about *The Cenci*, he admitted that the poems he had so far written had been artistically marred by his excessive moral zeal. But he remarked that in the composition of this drama: "I lay aside the presumptuous attitude of an instructor, and am content to paint, with such colours as my own heart furnishes, that which has been."[2] He told Keats in a letter about the same drama that "In poetry I have sought to avoid system and mannerism; I wish those who excel me in genius would pursue the same plan."[3] The above quotations do illustrate a conflict of loyalties in Shelley: to serve either the beautiful or the just. Still, he is inclined towards practical revolutionary action, but at the literary level. Of course the value of beauty cannot be ignored. The position he now wants to adopt is to harmonise both the values of the good and the beautiful. As we have seen above, he said with particular reference to *The Cenci* that he had discarded system and mannerism in poetry as well as the role of the instructor. All the same, I should think he plays the teacher in this poem. He interprets the original story, which eminently fitted his views, in terms of the doctrine of Necessity. The count had been reduced to a hardened sinner and criminal by the feudal circumstances at their worst. But the transformation of the character of Beatrice in the play best demonstrates the logic of the law of Necessity. Once Beatrice was convinced that she must destroy evil, she acquired demonic energy, which, of course, she used in the service of good. It may be pointed out that it is so in the story itself, but surely an artist, with an eye for the dramatic, would have used it with certain amendments. It was thus not a question of fidelity to fact, the story, as it was, fitted the Shelleyan interpretation of the past. The value of good had thus an upper hand in his artistic rendering of the story. Therefore the Radicals and the Owenites were correct when they put him up as the model of the revolutionary, socialist poet and thinker.

The Owenites knew Shelley's critical theory from *Queen Mab* as well as the prefaces to *The Revolt of Islam* and *Prometheus Unbound*, which in turn were demonstrations of that theory. Shelley put forward his poetical credo in his preface to *The Revolt of Islam*:

> **I have sought to enlist the harmony of metrical language, the etherial combinations of the fancy, the rapid and subtle transitions of human passion, all those elements which essentially compose a Poem, in the cause of a liberal and comprehensive morality, and in the view of kindling within the bosoms of my readers, a virtuous enthusiasm for those doctrines of liberty and justice, that faith and hope in something good, which neither violence, nor misrepresentation, nor prejudice, can ever totally extinguish among mankind.**

1. *Letters*, 26 January 1819.
2. *ibid*, 29 May 1819.
3. *ibid*, 27 July 1820.

It is obvious that the poet is subordinating the artistic excellence and the technical skill at his command to painting a succession of pictures. They illustrate what he lists in the long, second paragraph of the preface. Very briefly, it is a noble mind inspired by the ideals of good and justice, to resort to revolutionary activity for the overthrow of a despotic government. It involves all the usual details of fraud and treachery, foreign help and machination to keep the vested interests intact. Shelley claimed that the poem" "(with the exception of the first canto, which is purely introductory), is narrative, not didactic". Perhaps that is true. He made it explicit in his preface that "It is the business of the Poet to communicate to others the pleasure and the enthusiasm arising out of those images and feelings, in the vivid presence of which within his mind, consists at once his inspiration and his regard." This poem then is an attempt at a symbolic representation of the problem of good and evil in the form of a story of revolution, but as a poem, it is not a complete success. The partial failure of the poem lies in its extremely elaborate and unwieldy structure. The first canto represents purely the symbolic intention of the poet. This is also vaguely suggested at places in the rest of the poem but it is in the manner of an obtrusion into the political content that sets its tone and temper. The caves of Laon and Cythna, for example, with their intricate symbolism and elaborate detail, make the political struggle seem unreal and thin, lacking the fire and blood of a real war. The last canto again seems to be a sort of appendage, not properly integrated into the structure of the poem. In other words, the romantic and the realistic interests seem to be battling against each other; it is romantic technique used for a realistic subject, but they do not altogether harmonise.

In *A Defence of Poetry*,[1] Shelley brought out the relation of drama and social good in the following words:

The drama being that form under which a greater number of modes of expression of poetry are susceptible for being combined than any other, the connection of poetry and social good is more observable in the drama than in whatever other form, And it is indisputable that the highest perfection of human society has ever corresponded with the highest dramatic excellence; and that the corruption or the extinction of the drama in a nation where it has once flourished, is a mark of a corruption of manners, and an extinction of the energies which sustain the soul of social life.

He was discussing the aesthetic and moral excellence of Greek drama. It employed all the arts for creating a most life-like and profound effect; it employed not only language and action but also dance, music and painting. He went on to criticize the then modern English stage for being bloodless and thin in its presentations. His comment on Fletcher's *Rule a Wife, and have a Wife*, quoted by Peacock in his *Memoir of Shelley*, illustrates

1. *Essays, Letters from Abroad*, 1840.

the point. Although Shelley admitted that "There is comedy in its perfection", he was of the view that Fletcher's treatment of the theme of poverty in the play was entirely wrong. Instead of arousing sympathy for his characters, Fletcher made his audience laugh at them, forgetting that society itself was responsible for their misery. In Shelley's opinion drama was first and foremos the greatest instrument for good. When Peacock invited his attention to the "fineness of the expression", he answered ,"It is true, but the finer it is the worse it is, with such a perversion of sentiment". It is obvious that Shelley could not have liked it since it is neither romantic nor philosophical. Moreover, it is bawdy and coarse, though as drama, it is a great success. It is simply a case of inability to appreciate, for lack of sympathy, the genre to which the play belongs.

John Goodwayn Barmby took the same position in a series of articles entitled "The Past, The Present, and The Future of the Stage". In the very first article, he observed that Greek drama degenerated after Aristophanes and that a social reformer could not be interested in it "except as a proof that a degenerate drama is the well established sign of a degenerate age."[1] In his fourth article, he praised the Elizabethan drama, in which case he was again in agreement with Shelley. He chose to remark that "*art* and *effect* are as much one in the constitution of the drama, as man and woman are in the formation of the human being; each is the *completion* of the other".[2] In the fifth article of this series, he put this point more forcefully, even crudely. Observing that drama "aspires to be a school-master, not a mere *instructing* but an *educating* one",[3] he went on to explain that kingcraft and priestcraft were trembling at the speeches of the patriot-heroes. Each verse of the *Marseillaise*, each strophe of a hymn to liberty, shook their palaces and brought about the demolition of their churches. Class-legislation well knew that each liberal thought, and each loving sentiment, meant the ruin of the wrongly established power. Louis Phillipe was finding the threatre most difficult to rule since "it is the pens of the press and the gods of the pit who preside over the drama of today". Such is the "societarian" effect of drama. The point is, no doubt, exaggerated, but is not far from the truth. Barmby urged that "the dramatist must have sympathy with the movements, hopes, and destinies of the masses, to gain any general and genuine popularity."

This view of literature, serving as an instrument of propaganda for the furtherance and achievement of socio-political ends, is

1. *The New Moral World*, Vol. I (Third Enlarged Series), No. 7, 7 November 1840.

2. *ibid.* Vol. I (Third Enlarged Series), No. 26, 26 December 1840.

3. *ibid.* Vol. II (Third Enlarged Series), No. 6, 6 February 1841.

noble enough in itself. But the Owenites and Shelley presented it at a higher level as well. It was actually the role of the ideal poet who has the status of a prophet. The ideal poetry teaches, inspires, and ennobles. Here too they had Shelley as their model before them. The best statement on this point of view in the whole of the Owenite criticism is to be found in their critical appraisal of Shelley's poetry. They started a series of critical articles entitled "A Review of Modern Poets, Illustrations of the Philosophy of Modern Poetry", and the only poet they chose was Shelley. It might be well to quote at length from the first article:

> The first of the illustrious throng which I shall bring under review, is Percy Bysshe Shelley, because I consider him to be one of the greatest poets of this or any other age—a poet in the most broad and comprehensive meaning of the term—the most intellectual and ideal of any of Apollo's modern tuneful train. But not as a poet only is he entitled to precedence and esteem, but as a great moral, political, and social Reformer. As one who made the graces of poetry an instrument only for the most important and profound truths to the ear of an ignorant and priestridden world; as the nearest approximation, in his views, of all our poets to the social system; and as one of the kindest, bravest and purest beings that ever visited this moral wilderness, standing forth in bold relief, calm and unruffled amidst the insults and calumnies of ignorant and misguided men. It is these latter considerations, as well as his transcendant powers, both as a poet and a metaphysician, which have induced me to place him in the foremost ground, out of a list of worthy and benevolent spirits, which I have chosen for illustration. In Shelley, of all modern men, we witness the greatest approach in benevolence and disinterestedness of purpose to the venerable father of the social system. Like Mr. Owen, he seemed to live, not for himself, but that the world might receive the full benefit of his wisdom, working with the most undivided energy of purpose, to realise a healthier and purer public opinion, as the necessary prelude to a better state of society.[1]

So in the Owenite view, Shelley was the prophet-poet who had dedicated his life and thus his art, which was of the highest excellence, to the service of mankind. The Owenites were appealing to the reason of the people, but that was not always a very effective method. It presupposed a certain level of understanding on the part of the audience. The poetic appeal was to the imagination and the emotions of the people. It also presupposed a certain level of culture but the advantage here was that once the heart was stirred, the purpose was achieved. An ignorant worker may not be able to grasp the real meaning of the verse even when explained to him, but the line may catch his ear, its rhythm and the whole tenor of the music may capture his imagination. Then indeed it was sure to go deep down into the heart; this no doubt is a more effective way of instruction, preaching or propaganda.

In an article entitled "Effects of Literature on the Moral Character",[2] actually the text of a lecture delivered by Reverend John Goulter Dowling to the Gloucester Literary Association, the effects of such noble literature are explained with great conviction

1. op. cit. Vol. V. No. 6, 1 December 1838.
2. *ibid.* Vol. I (Third Enlarged Series), No. 11, 12 September 1840.

and clarity. He is of the opinion that "when literary pursuits are carried on honestly, soberly, and in a right spirit, they elevate and purify the moral character". The creator, as well as the reader, of such literature is raised above himself. His thought expands and he looks upon things as if from an eminence. Besides, literary pursuits remove coarseness and violence which are characteristic of ignorance. They are humanizing, they bring about refinement of personality. The wide intellectual and emotional sympathy thus created by stimulating the imagination of the reader makes him realize the real condition of men and "in his studies he has gained a deeper and more comprehensive love of his species; his heart has been trained to the exercise of habitual kindness and philanthropy". The parson emphasized it again and again that a conscientious, moral approach was essential, otherwise the study of literature could be very harmful. It is an attempt to equate literature with morals, to make it a hand-maid of virtue. Like politics, literature too in the Owenite eye, was a species of morals. Good is the greatest value, the value of truth lies in its accordance with reality, and that of beauty in its effectiveness as a medium for the glory of the other two.

Robert Buchanan, in his article, "True and False Religion",[1] invested such literature with religious dignity. According to his view, the function of literature is not only moral, but also religious. The whole question of literature had come full circle. The false religion—Christianity—had created vicious literature, the philanthropic religion—Socialism—inspired noble literature. In Robert Buchanan's view, "Poetry is all love and sympathy." "The poet who sings of love, hope, and human perfectibility, or makes us sympathise with external nature, is a minister of religion". Clearly this is a reference to Shelley. When the poet sings of hope, he conjures up such a picture of the future that we forget our present miseries and the past sufferings. He inspires us with sympathy, arouses us to fight the evil, and encourages us to shape the world anew. Besides, poetry purifies our nature and lifts us to a higher plane of living. Similar is the function of music. "Music is religion for music is harmony, and harmony is religion". Of the same status as that of the prophet—artist is the expounder of the physical laws of nature, since "His mission is truly to justify the ways of God to man". The true poets are thus of the company of the ministers of religion. "They are....the prophets of humanity—the high-priests of Nature."[2]

This view is not very far from Shelley's. He scrupulously stuck to the ideal he set for himself as well as jealously guarded the high

1. op. cit. Vol. I (Third Enlarged Series), No. 22, 28 November 1840.
1. op. cit. Vol. VI (Third Series), No. 51, 14 June 1945.

temple of poetry. His *Peter Bell the Third* is a chastisement of Wordsworth for having turned his back on the true role of a poet. During the period of the composition of *Prometheus Unbound*, Shelley still further amended his critical position as regards his poetry. With *Queen Mab*, he was the poet of the revolutionaries, even of the rank and file. But at this stage, he was the poet of the elect few, and it was their function to inspire the rank and file. This is what he says in his preface to *Prometheus Unbound*:

> My purpose has hitherto been simply to familiarize the highly refined imagination of the more select classes of poetical readers with beautiful idealisms of moral excellence ; aware that until the mind can love, and admire, and trust, and hope, and endure, reasoned principles of moral conduct are seeds cast upon the highway of life which the unconscious passenger tramples into dust, although they would bear the harvest of his happiness.

The above view of poetry logically culminates in that which Shelley enunciated in *A Defence of Poetry* (1820). Poets are not merely the creators of rhythm and language, metaphors and pictures but "they are the institutors of laws and the founders of civil society and the inventors of the arts of life, and the teachers, who draw into a certain propinquity with the beautiful and the true, that partial apprehension of the agencies of the invisible world which is called religion." He goes on to say that the poets in the earlier epochs were called legislators or prophets since they not only analyse the present but also discover those laws according to which the future ought to the shaped. He thus lifts the status of the poet from that of a mere agitator to that of a prophet.

Shelley also believed that ethical science gives a clear and concrete formulation to the dreams and flights of the poets. Only poetry "acts in a divine and unapprehended manner", it refines, awakens, and enlarges the mind. "Poetry lifts the veil from the hidden beauty of the world", and reveals the hitherto unknown relations between various objects, feelings, and thoughts; these are perceived by the poet in the imaginative apprehension of an experience. By creating a work of art, he helps others see what he himself has seen in his inspired moments. This is the function of the creative process. It is the perception of the beautiful that creates empathy with the object of contemplation. "The great secret of morals is love". Shelley therefore advised:

> A man to be truly good, must imagine intensely, and comprehensively; he must put himself in the place of another and of many others, the pains and pleasures of his species must become his own. The great instrument of moral good is the imagination.. ..Poetry strengthens the faculty which is the organ of the moral nature of man, in the same manner as exercise strengthens a limb.

At the end of this paragraph from which the above quotation is taken, Shelley mentions Euripides, Lucan, Tasso and Spenser as representatives of that type of poetry in which the moral aim dominates

over the artistic, forgetting that he himself belonged to the same class.

Finally for Shelley, as for many other poets and critics, poetry was the *summun bonum* of human experience, the essence of the whole intellectual life of a nation during a specific period. "It is at once the centre and circumference of knowledge; it is that which comprehends all science, and that to which all science must be rerfered". Poetry is "the record of the best and happiest moments of the happiest and best minds". A poet, then, according to Shelley is the wisest, the happiest, and the best man. He is greater in status than the politician, the social legislator and other benefactors of society. This is because they are inspired by him; it is his passion and sincerity, his vision and insight that arouse the people to mould their circumstances so that their dreams may come true. "The most unfailing herald, companion, and follower of the awakening of a great people to work a beneficial change in opinion or institution, is poetry". Therefore he repeated at the end of the essay that "Poets are the unacknowledged legislators of the world".

These views of Shelley on poetry—poetry enlarges and refines the mind, appeals to the emotional nature of man by providing the reader with an imaginative apprehension of experience, it develops the faculty of thinking and the spirit of inquiry by the consciousness it thus creates, it gives the noblest ideas and systems to the law-makers and social thinkers, it arouses people to practical action for the achievement of a better society—these views exactly correspond with the views of the Owenites, as discussed above. The views expressed by Reverend Dowling and Robert Buchanan seem to be a paraphrase of Shelley's—so close is their correspondence. Since *A Defence of Poetry* was printed in 1840, being eager Shelleyites, they probably devoured it. Anyway the correspondence between the Owenites and Shelley on the matter of literature is as close as on any other.

A Defence of Poetry was a romantic poetics. It emphasized imagination and played down the role of reason in creative activity. Imagination perceives the quality of the already known quantities as well as the qualitative relationships between them. "Reason is to imagination as the instrument to the agent, as the body to the spirit, as the shadow to the substance". Imagination is a great instrument of good; every aesthetic judgment is necessarily moral and ontological. This is more or less the position the Owenites had come to adopt as the above excerpts from their writings show. In Shelley's view, "A poem is the very image of love, life expressed in the eternal truth. It creates beauty". It is "an identification of ourselves with the beautiful which exists in thought, action, or person, not our own". Time destroys their beauty, but imagination immortalizes it in the

form of artistic pieces. The Owenites, too, believed in these elements and characteristics of poetry. It was Robert Buchanan who said that "A perception of the beautiful is the instinctive tendency of the true poet". He illustrated the point from Shelley's poetry; Shelley had immortalised the music of the skylark. Similarly, in Buchanan's view, Wordsworth and Coleridge had invested mean and humble objects with charm and beauty, making the insignificant and the mortal, significant and the immortal. A short piece entitled "The Sense Beauty" by Dr. Channing, was a hymn of praise to the goddess of of beauty, Nature has endowed man with the sense of beauty, and all around it has created beauty. This is the supreme joy of life. The best books give the greatest sense of beauty and they win the hearts of the readers with the same success with which they have been invested with beauty. This is the true culture of man. In the end he remarked: "From the diffusion of the sense of beauty in ancient Greece, and of the taste for music in modern Germany, we learn that the people at large may partake of refined gratifications which have hitherto been thought to be necessarily restricted to a few".[1]

As I have tried to explain above, the Owenites kept pace with Shelley's greater shift towards the Platonic position in critical theory, in that they also came to believe that aesthetics is a part of the science of morals. But the companionship ends there. For Shelley the poet scared into the region of the 'Essences', 'Ideas' and the 'Eternal'. The following statement represents an attitude and state of mind where only Platonic 'knowledge' could lead; for the Owenites it must have remained a mystery or something of not so great an importance as to divert attention from the real position of Godwin's benevolent ethics from which both they and Shelley had started, and which was the common ground between them:

> **(Poetry) arrests the vanishing aspirations which haunt the interlunations of life, and veiling them, or in language or in form, sends them forth among mankind, bearing sweet news of kindred joy to those with whom their sisters abide—abide, because there is no portal of expression from the caverns of the spirit which they inhabit into the universe of things. Poetry redeems from decay the visitations of the divinity in man.**

This extreme Plantonic position is further taken up in his account of the creative process. For Plato, the poet works at two removes from reality; his creation is the shadow of the shadow, and the imitation of the imitation. Shelley says the same thing in rather figurative language, "the mind in creation is as a fading coal... When the composition begins, inspiration is already on the decline, and the most glorious poetry that has ever been communicated to the world is probably a feeble shadow of the original conceptions of the poet."

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1. op. cit. Vol. IV. (Third Enlarged Series), No. 17, 22 October 1842.

The first Owenite statement on the creative process is found in an introductory note to his poem, "The Vessel Of Freedom", by Robert Dale Owen. He called it something feverish; he had written it in a fever. "At such times, the thoughts whirl through the brain with a rapidity and a vividness, which, I cannot help thinking, is allowed to the poetical enthusiasm".[1] He repeated these views in another short article entitled "Poetry".[2] He at best equated it with Platonic frenzy; he however made no reference to the mimetic theory of expression, but he does betray romantic predilection. The same point of view seems to be at work in the selection of a piece from Sir Humphry Davy which the Owenites published in the column of "Gleanings", entitling it "Poetry and Science". It supports the theory of the spontaneous overflow of feelings and the Platonic frenzy which possesses the poet in the act of creation: "The power of mind in the fervour of poetical composition, flows like a mountain torrent—sparkling, foaming, beautiful and grand".[3] The Owenites too believed with Shelley that a poet is born and no efforts on the part of an individual can make him a poet. John Barmby went out of his way in his series of articles on "The Past, The Present, and The Future of the Stage" to point out that a good prose-writer need not be a good poet. He quite gleefully quoted an old proverb: "*Poeta nascitur, non fit*," :

> **"The poet's born, the black-coat parson made is,**
> **But poet-manufacturing no trade is"[4].**

In another article of the same series, he observed that "Shakespeare was born, and all rule, except that of beauty, gave way before his genius".[5] But a born poet has to learn the use of his instruments all the same. Both Shelley's practice and theory support it. But the Platonic cast of his mind and his tendency to soar in the regions of infinites made him impatient with the toil of communication. Hence he remarked in *A Defence of Poetry*:

> **I appeal to the greatest poets of the present day, whether it is not an error to assert that the finest passages of poetry are produced by labour and study. The toil and delay recommended by critics can be justly interpreted to mean more than a careful observation of the inspired moments, and an artificial connection of the spaces between their suggestions, by the intermixture of conventional expressions a necessity only imposed by the limitedness of the poetic faculty itself ; for Milton conceived the *Paradise Lost* as a whole before he executed it in portions. We have his own authority also for the muse having "dictated" to him the "unpremeditated song".**

This emphasis of Shelley on the divine nature of poetry and the equation of inspiration with the creative process itself, is an extreme

1. *The Free Inquirer*, Vol. II. No 44, 28 August 1830.
2. *The Crisis*, Vol. II. No. 14, 13 April 1833.
3. *The New Moral World*, Vol. II (Third Enlarged Seiies), No. I, 2 January 1841.
4. *ibid*. Vol. I (Third Enlarged Series) No. 24, 12 December 1840.
1. op. cit. Vol I (Third Enlarged Secries), No. 26,) 26 December 1840.

position in Romantic critical theory. It is here sharply opposed to the practice and theory of such classical poets as Dryden and Pope. The Owenites did not go to this length. They upheld the value of toil in the creative process, in spite of their romantic sympathies. A review of *Flowers and Fruits* by James Elinslie Duncan, contains this remark on the creative process, "To be a poet requires more than the ability tc put well rhythmed and rhymed lines together. A true poem is the highest effort of high powers highly cultivated".[1] True, the Owenites could not soar with Shelley into the higher regions of 'ideas' and kept their feet firmly on the ground. Yet, like Shelley they generally regarded the question of style and technique as of secondary importance. For Shelley, the experience was doubly important for the truth it contained and for the level to which it had lifted him. For the Owenites, its value lay only in the truth that it could convey. Therefore their emphasis was on clarity, so that the reader could benefit most from it. Shelley, too, shared this ideal, but here the complex demands of his personality did not always help him.

Shelley's concern with the craft of poetry was much greater and much more genuine, although he neglected it at times for the sake of higher values. In his preface to *The Cenci*, he remarked that "Imagination is as the immortal God which should assume flesh for the redemption of mortal passion". In a sense, he had realized that embodied thought as a medium of artistic beauty was to be preferred to abstraction. But he again forgot it when he came to employ imagery in *Prometheus Unbound*: it was drawn from" the operations of the human mind, or from those external actions by which they are expressed". However, Shelley showed his agreement with those critics who upheld that the poets should use the familiar language of men if they wanted to move them to true sympathy. But as he himself made clear at every occasion, he was trying to forge a new style, although he admitted that a certain amount of similarity in the use of language among the poets of the same age was inevitable. He emphasized the independence of a creative artist; he was free to create a new language. No doubt, he created his own language for his own purposes which has its own charm and beauty, whatever might be said about its defects. In fact we find two different styles in his poetry: the lyrical, semi symbolist method and the realistic, concrete way of saying a thing. His main style was the romantic carried to its extreme; lyrical, semi-symbolist marked by varying degrees of vagueness and diffusion. Though, as is well known, he took great pains with his compositions, his creative process had these inherent defects in it, which were bound to exhibit themselves when he was not too careful or when the inspiration was short-lived. At places, he turned this disadvantage into a virtue; some sort of vagueness and diffusiveness was essential for creating a proper

1. *ibid.* Vol. V. (Third Series), No. 31, 27 January 1844.

atmosphere depicting the higher reaches of imagination and the poet's intuitive grasp of the 'ideas'. There this quality of his genius displayed itself at its best, as for example in *Prometheus Unbound.* Yet the fact remains that notwithstanding his propagandist zeal, his conception of artistic integrity would not allow him to improve on his poems.

The best Owenite statement regarding the function of language is found in "The Utility of Praise and Blame". "For ourselves we care little about words for their own sakes, nor are we attached to any in particular; with Locke we conceive that there is no spell or fascination in any of them".[1] It is sufficient that they should faithfully convey what the writer or the speaker wants to say. On this basis, in an editorial article entitled "Church Socialism" by The Quarterly Review", the Owenites criticized the style of Carlyle. It was called "singular, mystified and laboured",[2] but excused only on the ground that by virtue of its novelty, it was attractive. His writings had become a matter of discussion all over the country "from the giant *Quarterly* to the provincial weekly newspaper", every cne was talking of them. And this delighted the Owenites since his teachings were in accord with theirs, at least as regards the diagnosis of the ills of the present society. The beauty of style therefore chiefly lay in its clarity, but one may not always be able to guard oneself against the temptation of being clear without being slovenly and shoddy, particularly where the mind is preoccupied with the value of the desired effect. "J.N." in a letter entitled "Public Instructors",[3] discussed the comparative value of dry-as-dust and rhetorical styles. He condemned the dry style since, for lack of emotional overtones, it does not easily arouse a response. The rhetorical style on the other hand appeals, provided one does not carry it too far. Ebenezer Jones was criticized, in the review[4] of *Studies in Sensation and Event,* for his extravagant images, his overstrained effort after effect and his coining of new phrases. Thus truthfulness of expression was the greatest requisite of a literary composition. At times, by way of a passing reference, the rhythmic and metrical qualities were also noted. The reviewer of *Herbert and Rosina, with other Poems* by R. W. Thom, observed that the work "has great variety both of subject and metre".[5] To give another example, "The Chimes" of Dickens was in their view" perhaps less artistically constructed as a story"[6] than his "Christmas Carol". Thus the Owenites were mainly concerned with the clarity of the style, even at the expense of aesthetic values. Their occasional re-

1. op. cit. Vol. I (Third Enlarged Series), No. 25, 19 December 1840.
2. *ibid.* Vol. I. (Third Enlarged Series), No. 15, 10 October 1840.
3. op. cit. Vol. II. (Third Enlarged Series), No. 6, 6 February 1841.
4. *ibid.* Vol. VI (Third Series), No. 7, 10 August 1844.
5. *ibid.* Vol. I. (Third Enlarged Series), No. 13, 26 September 1840.
6. *ibid.* Vol. VI. (Third Series), No. 28, 4 January 1844.

ferences to rhythm, metre and construction are always in relation to their contribution towards the clarity of the whole piece.

The Owenites show a predilection in their criticism towards romantic ideals of poetry. The main reasons were their identification with Shelley's poetics and the very nature of the contemporary romantic poetry. It was a revolt against the canons of the neo-classical poetry of the eighteenth century; it stood for the down-trodden and was thus democratic and revolutionary. The Tory press had heaped abuses upon Leigh Hunt, Shelley and Keats; they had condemned even Wordsworth and Coleridge. No doubt, both the latter had become conservative, but they never lost their concern for the common man. It was only Southey, in the Owenite view, who had deserted the cause and by accepting the poet-laureateship, had pandered to the vile Tory ideals. Another important reason perhaps was that by the year 1830, when Owenite Journalism came into full swing, the romantic poets had been accepted as poets of originality whose works were characterized by sincerity of purpose and high ideals. They acknowledged the benign influence of Wordsworth on contemporary poetry and appreciated his treatment of Nature. In the review of *The Past, The Present, and The Future*, it was remarked that "Already the peaceful and philosophic muse of WORDSWORTH is insinuating its own gentleness and deep beauty into the public mind, and giving us a foretaste of the nature of the poetry of the future".[1] Elsewhere tributes were also paid to the poetry and genius of other romantic poets. In an article entitled "On the Necessity and Pleasures of Agricultural Employment", the salutary influence of Nature on the character of man was discussed; those who had intellectual and moral greatness were born and bred in Nature. Great minds like Byron, Shelley, Elliott and Burns "drew their inspiration, from the skies the stars, the ocean, and the clouds. The finest and true poetry is rich in thoughts, suggested by the inspiration of nature."[2]

This romantic predilection is confirmed by their attitude towards the reaction against Pope's poetry. Coleridge had said in his *Biographia Literaria* that if Pope was a poet, Dryden then was a greater poet. This reaction had first been started by Reverend William Lisle Bowles in his ten volume edition of the works of Pope (1806). In a review of *The Monthly Magazine* for the month of February 1841, which had published an article on "English Wits", the Owenites agreed with the editor, J.A. Heraud, that Pope had talent rather than genius. Almost all his compositions were products, characterized by wit and fancy, not emotions. They quoted approvingly from the said magazine; the following is a part of the long quotation:

1. op. cit. Vol. VII. (New Series), No. 79, 25 April 1840.
2. *ibid.* Vol. IV. No. 190, 16 June 1838.

> In his works, he indeed displays the lustre of epithet, but not the earnestness or generosity of truth the harmony of numbers, but not that dignity which can be well supported only by true greatness, and in which only it is becoming. If he had been capable of such feelings, he would have given a different temper to his wit, and veiled much of his satire.[1]

This criticism of Pope is obviously the result of a strong leaning towards romantic technique and ideals of poetry. Perhaps Pope was as earnest in exposing the contemporary society as Shelley or anybody else, and he chose the best weapons for discharging his duty. Even if the Owenites had been convinced of this purpose of his poetry, he had other disqualifications; he was not a socialist, nor did he suggest anything of that nature, besides being vindictive in his satire as his biographies reveal. These factors stood in the way of their true appreciation of Pope's poetry.

The Owenites, as we have seen, kept an eye on the new writings that were coming out of the press. They very wisely followed the main critical trend of liberal literary journals, throwing their weight on their side. It was after getting their due from them that they supported or condemned a writer according to their own lights. This is clear in their attitude to Shelley and the rest of the romantics. They encouraged their own poets, but they had no illusions about their literary value whatsoever. The writers whom they specially welcomed were Dickens and Carlyle. In a review entitled "Boz's Sketches", they showed their pleasure at the popularity of Dickens since he represented the life of the ordinary man living in squalor and misery, almost on the border of crime and insanity. He wrote with great concern for the poor and exposed the defects of society with humour and ridicule. With Dickens, the Owenites discovered that humour is another medium of instruction, since through it, Dickens addressed himself "to the understanding even of the most unthinking. As they are truths, such as we are happy in knowing must advance the course of Socialism"[2]. Besides, his writings illustrated the basic Owenite tenet that circumstances make or mar a man. The Owenites also took this opportunity to censure *The Quarterly* for its judgment of the character of Oliver Twist. It had called it unnatural: "represented too good for the circumstances in which he is placed". No doubt it was Dickens's purpose, as he said in his preface, to demonstrate "the principle of Good surviving through every adverse circumstance, and triumphing at last". In other words, he set out to write a moral fairy tale in contemporary terms. His writings had no doubt a great appeal for the people in their general revolutionary mood of 1830s. According to *The Morning Chronicle*, "Boz has produced so strong an impression.. that in Chelsea, for instance, people have gone about lecturing for the purpose of counteracting his writings".[3] The socialist philoso-

1. op. cit. Vol. II (Third Enlarged Series) No. 10, 6 March 1941.
2. op. cit. Vol. I. (Third Enlarged Series) No. 3, 18 July 1840.
3. 2 September 1837.

phy, in the opinion of the Owenites, now had its own disciples like Dickens who was an extremely good writer, even according to the non-Owenite press. Certainly it was a great triumph—the Owenites had succeeded, one might say, in putting the new writers on the right lines, which as we have seen, had been suggested to them by Shelley. In the review of "The Chimes", the Owenites remarked: "Charles Dickens, by far the most genial and popular English writer of the day, is not less a disciple of this philosophy".1 What if, as Yeats desired, it would have been possible to "see again a Shelley and a Dickens in the one body"![1]

Carlyle's *Past and Present* was welcomed by the Owenites. They were extemely critical of the literature of the 1830s and 1840s. Writers like Dickens and Carlyle came as a fresh breath in the stagnant atmosphere of contemporary literature. It was no small pleasure. since the unconventional authors could not find publishers easily, In a review of the book, Carlyle was called one of the most highly gifted, eloquent, and universally read writers of the present day who had shown an earnest concern for the exposition of the conditions, obtaining in England. It was a trumpet call to the task of amending the situation. He had exposed Mammonism and Dilettantism, although the remedies that he had put forward were not new. The Owenites said that they had been suggesting them for many years. It was his earnestness and powerful style that impressed them, otherwise they could find faults with his philosophy. His writings were "Like the utterance of some inspired oracle of old-prophet and poet-combined".[3] He was thus in accord with the Owenites, particularly as regards the future, so he was "most truly a philosopher of transition from the old society to something better".[4] He also supported the basic tenet of the system, as they explained in the next part of the review: "When before was the principle, that the character of man is formed for, and not by him, illustrated and enforced in so earnest and touching a manner as, by Carlyle".[5]

Among the new poets that the Owenites quoted for reasons of propaganda, Ebenezer Elliott and Thomas Hood found greatest favour with them. There are scattered references to Elliott's fine mind and genius: "all the glowing and loving fierceness of Elliott". He was the poet of the poor, and a friend of the Socialist system. In an article entitled "An Essay towards Philanthropic Philology"[6] by John Barmby, we find him equated with the leading romantic poets. The Owenites also paid a tribute to the "infinite jest" and "most excellent fancy" of Thomas Hood in a leading article discussing the

1. op. cit. Vol. VI. (Third Series), No. 28, 4 January 1845.
2. W. B. Yeats, *The Cutting of an Agate*, 1919, p. 109.
3. Op. cit. Vol. V. (Third Series), 7, 12 August 1843.
4. *ibid.* No. 9, 26 August 1843.
5. *ibid.* No. 21, 18 August 1843.
6. op. cit. Vol. II (Third Enlarged series) No. 14, 3 April 1843.

condition of the agricultural labourer. They said that his writings revealed profound sympathy for the downtrodden: "even in his humorous pieces we can discover an undercurrent of deep pathos and warm feeling, which often makes the heart palpitate with emotion, while the face is wreathed in smiles".[1]

Apart from these young, modern writers, the Owenites showed great dissatisfaction with the quality and ideals of the contemporary literature. It catered to the fashionable, pandered to the ignorant taste, or lowered itself simply to have a wide circulation. The influence of the "silver fork" school of literature was extremely pernicious. The artist had been corrupted by the commercial world, which "does not accomodate itself to art, does not help conception".[2] Thus said Victor Considerant, while exhorting the artists to first create proper social conditions that would enable the arts to flourish. Shelley also condemned the new commercial class in *A Philosophical View of Reform*; "They poison the literature of the age in which they live by requiring either the antitype of their own mediocrity in books, or such stupid and distorted and inharmonious idealisms as alone have the power to stir their torpid imaginations."

In an article entitled "Morality of the Nineteenth Century",[3] reproduced from the *Morning Herald*, the contemporary state of literature, particularly of the stage-plays, was severely criticised. In the critic's view, they were merely trying to keep the public in a state of emotional fervour. The greatest characteristic of this literature was an appetite for all that was hideous, base and revolting— the false goddess of excitement. The result was that the natural and wholesome pieces were despised. It was an age of monstrous and extravagant sentiment. In another article entitled "The Stage", the theatrical performances were again criticised for drawing a picture of riotousness in the streets. The society which professed Christian principles took delight in enjoying these immoral presentations of an immoral life. The critic pointed out that "our comedies and farces openly exhort to the most shameless licentiousness, as has been elsewhere said of those who exhort to nothing of the kind, namely the Socialists".[4] Most of the contemporary plays were vulgar, since they appealed to the sensuous in man and not to his reason. The Owenites reprinted under "Gleanings", a piece which gave the definition of vulgarity in literature. It is a sound exposition of the subject.

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1. *ibid.* Vol. VI. (Third Series), No. 22, 23 November 1844.
2. *ibid.* Vol. V. No. 36, 29 June 1839 (*The Social Destiny*).
3. op. cit. Vol. I (Third Enlarged Series), No. 6, 8 August 1840.
4. *ibid.* Vol, I (Third Enlarged Series) No. 10, 5 September 1840.

The vulgar is in everything which does not speak to the mind, and which raises merely a sensuous interest. There is in ase (*sic*) true, a thousand things which are vulgar from their subject or their contents but as the vulgarity of the subjects can be elevated by its treatment, it is the question of the vulgar in form. [1].

The writer went on to say that a dull author would debase a subject whereas a clever one would transmute it into something noble and inspiring. Again, it is the writers who were at fault; they had been corrupted by the new commercial world.

John Barmby, in his series of articles on the stage severely criticised modern drama: "As yet, it is an art, content to exhibit the two antipodal types of nature, the sublime and the grotesque, the divine and the demoniac, the virtuous and the vicious, without the introduction of any third type, or idea, to purify, melodize, and moralize them".[2] Barmby further discussed the point that Victor Hugo had given his authority to this method of dramatic characterization. But he suggested that these two types of characters, the virtuous and the vicious, the sublime and the grotesque, were not enough. There must be a third type. This was the reflective, which would "pacify, moralize, and melodize his two adversial types, and not only them, but the dual antipodal ideas of the ancient and modern drama". The contemporary drama had created confusion in the minds of the play-goers. Thus a reform of the stage was badly needed if it was to create a good "societarian" effect.

On the theatre of the present day a tragedy is brought out; it is powerful in the delineation of anti-podal character; it brings forth the man of sublime virtue, but the virtuous has his failings; it introduces the man of deepest vice, but the vicious has his virtues:— hence there is confusion; the mind is lost in a maze of contrary ideas. . . .

Therefore the chorus must be frequently introduced in various parts of the play, which would serve the role of the much-needed, third reflective type. Some confusion apart, it is the mixture of the vicious and the virtuous that he is condemning. What he suggests is, that the virtuous should be entirely virtuous and the vicious entirely vicious. They must be delineated as such so that the audience is not "dazzled by the poetry of vice". Barmby presented this new theory of drama in an effort to reform the stage. It was called the choral theory of drama.

So too, in the case of dramatic theory, Shelley is the model and the guide. His observations on the function of drama and chorus prove to be the rules for the Owenite criticism of drama. It might be

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1. *ibid*, Vol. II. (Third Enlarged Series), No. 14, 3 April 1841.
   [It is a quotation from "Thoughts on the use of the vulgar and the Mean in Art", translated from Schiller by G. H. Lewes, which appeared in *The Monthly Chronicle*, February 1841.]
2. op. cit. Vol. II (Third Enlarged Series), No. 6, 6 February 1841.

recalled that in *A Defence of Poetry* Shelley had paid glowing tributes to the function of the chorus in Greek drama. Not only that, his own mode of characterization as found in *The Cenci*, *Prometheus Unbound* and *Hellas* sets a standard for the judgment of characters in drama. How deep was Shelley's influence on the Owenites is also demonstrated by John Barmby's Choral theory of drama.

John Barmby, in his articles on the stage, gave high praise to *Douglas*, *Ion*, and *The Smuggler's Daughter*, *Douglas*, no doubt, found favour with the Owenites because of its theme. Lady Randolph had married for love against her father's wishes; she was unhappy in her arranged marriage with Lord Randolph. The critic quoted Gray's opinion that John Home had "retrieved the true language of the stage, lost for three hundred years". But he would not have considered this aspect of the play, had he not first been in agreement with its theme. *Ion*, according to Barmby, voiced "the people's murmurs and the people's love[1]", and was thus popular with them. The reason again for its approval was its theme: Ion sacrificed himself to save the people:

> **"Argos ne'er shall find release**
> **Till her monarch's race shall cease".**
> **(II. iii.)**

Sergeant Talfourd, in his preface, had modestly called it "the phantasm of a tragedy", which it is. The *Smuggler's Daughter*, in Barmby's opinion, came up to the standard set by Edward Lytton Bulwer: "Among the people, must the tragic author invoke the genius of modern tragedy, and learn its spring". It is a noble ideal indeed and I am inclined to think that the play achieves it. But in view of the Owenite fixed standards of judgment, I cannot refrain from remarking that it is Margaret's marriage for love and such other things as the song of Banjamin Rustle in which lies its chief appeal for the Owenites. James Bird, no doubt, created lively drama by a skilful combination of low humour and sentimental songs in the world of smuggling.

It might not be irrelevant here to mention that Restoration Comedy met their censure when the Owenites criticised its defence by Charles Lamb in his *Essays of Elia*, in their article entitled "The Stage":

> **He says that characters on the stage belong so entirely to a mimic world, different from that we live in, that they are privileged to commit adultery and fornication with impunity; the spectators have only to look on and laugh, it is not their business to imitate. Such reasoning may suit a lawyer, accustomed to quibbling, but not a plain honest man.[2]**

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1. op. cit. Vol. II (Third Enlarged Series), No. 6, 6 February 1841.
1. op. cit. Vol. I. (Third Enlarged Series), No. 10, 5 September 1840.

Perhaps the truth lies midway between the two extremes adopted by the Owenites and Charles Lamb. Certainly the characters represented on the Restoration stage had their counterparts in life, the disgusting picture is at least superficially true of the high society of the period, but with no attempt at reforming it. However, the turning of this reality into comic art by the playwrights, leads the issue at least to the point of serious consideration. It may be said that the Restoration dramatists were trying to rationalize sexual relationships. If this had dawned upon the Owenites, they certainly would have sung their praises.

In this very article, *The Beggar's Opera* was included among immoral writings. It was, however, acknowledged that it was "a work which contains the most plaintive and beautiful music, to the most odious words, by an old popular writer". The critic went on to say that "It may be said that Macheath is an ungodly man; but then, unfortunately, his ungodliness is catching". The songs were certainly "indecent and demoralizing". The play showed cheats and frauds in a sympathetic manner which amounted to an approval of their character and conduct. It depicted a state of society where woman had obviously been reduced to a prostitute, but the representation savoured of approval. It is a pity that they should have thus failed to appreciate one of the most English of all English operattas, which taught England the value of the balled music for stage use. Besides, they missed the whole point of its satire, which was not merely directed at Italian opera, but at contemporary politics, society and literature. The serious intent of the play is clear from the following:

"We are for a just partition of the world, for every man hath a right to enjoy life". Thus *The Beggar's Opera*, which is certainly ranked among good dramatic pieces, was entirely misunderstood by the Owenites. Had they rightly apprehended it, surely they would have raised it to the skies.

The New Moral World reproduced an article from *Douglas Jerrold's Magazine*, entitled "The Morbidness of the Age".[1] It admitted that theirs was a morbid age, since the standards of values were shifting. The old values were tottering and the new had not as yet been created. Healthy literature was the product of a stable society which had a fixed standard of values, and it could pass judgment without a moment's hesitation. He referred to the essayists of the eighteenth century as being healthy writers. But the writers of today could not accept those values, the present society had no more use for them. The literature of the age was thus a representation of confusion of mind, but it was not a matter of disgrace because it was bound to be so. It was the literature of transition; under such circumstances, it was better to be morbid than healthy as a

1. Vol. VI. (Third Series), No. 57, 26 July 1845.

sensitive human being is certainly better than a turnip. All periods of transition work for a good end if people have a sincere faith in the progress of humanity. The healthy man of the old school might still have a firm belief in the old values, but he would only be closing his eyes to the changing realities. But the healthy man of the new school diagnoses the ills of the present times, and lays the basis of a brighter future. "An Optimist," therefore, in his article, "The Man and His Age" remarked "The voice of the 'man that knows his age' may often be widely different from that of the age itself.... the man who thus speaks, as multitudes have dimly thought, is the poet of his age".[1]

One such book, copious selections from which were published by the Owenites, under the heading "Struggles of an Earnest Truthful Mind in the Old Immoral World",[2] was *Realities* by Eliza Lynn. These selections were made not only from the novel itself, but also from the preface. She stated in the preface that for three months, her book had been regarded as a "Literary Caliban"—a monstrous thing of wickedness and deformity. She adhered to her principle of presenting truth in spite of the bad name that she had earned. "I have not written one word which I do not believe with all my heart and soul, and to uphold which I would not willingly suffer any amount of pain and social dis-esteem". A study of this novel reveals that it was written according to a set formula in the novelist's mind, in terms of the Owenite system. The following quotation may support this contention:

....the scorned and scoffed-at Socialist—the man whom political economists sneer at as a visionary and impractical man, and whom the churchman pronounces infidel and heretic—the man who, on the faith of humanity and the power that spoke in Christ, preaches mutual co-operation with all men whether they be poor or they may be fallen: love and fundamental equality building up the temple of fraternal aid under every condition. If the social doctrines of Christianity be true, then Percival was right; for SOCIALISM, in its present form, is the only result that can be extracted from those doctrines.[3]

This is clearly a description of Owen and his system. Then there is a tribute to Shelley, the perfect poet according to the Owenite tenets. Miss Lynn is describing the mental development of Clara who was not appreciated at all by the Saumarezes; she was in a sense a genius born in adverse circumstances. Her emotional life, her joy in living, her unconventional manners—all these things were an anathema in the eyes of her parents. At one of these places, Miss Lynn brought in Shelley: "Call it what you will—lack of dignity, of pride, of self-control; brand it with what harsh names cold dullness ever gives to unknown feelings; yet sure it is the faculty which threw on Sappho all her beauty, on Shelley all his power.[4] "The novel analyses the

1. *The Moral World*, Vol. I. No. II, 8 November 1845.
2. *Robert Owen's Journal*, Vol. III, No. 61, 27 December 1851.
3. *Realities*, Vol. I. pp. 189—190.
4. *ibid.* pp. 101—102.

socio-economic system in terms of the exploiter and the exploited; it exposes prostitution which is an intergral part of the capitalist system. It disparages the old system of morality and recommends in its place the new that would bring real happiness to the people. It also makes a plea for the liberalization of the arts and for according them an honourable place in society. Percival Glynn was the man of tomorrow, whereas Vaughan Vasti was a revolting specimen of the old immoral world. All the same, the novel as a work of art remains at a low level.

Such an attitude in literary criticism as that of the Owenites, as we have seen above, at times displays rigidity and over-simplification. In this connection, I make a particular reference to Barmby's criticism of Shakespeare and Milton in his series of articles on the stage. Although he acknowledged the genius of Shakespeare, as we have seen earlier in this chapter, he maintained that the present society had no more use for him. The problems discussed in his plays had no relevance to the present age, he had falsified history and thus was a dangerous guide on that account.[1] According to Barmby, "Milton will not be so much known in the Future, as the poet; but as the Politician, and the Socialist, (in the extended sense of that term)[2]". He was a good prose writer and thinker, his views on marriage and divorce were progressive, but his poetry glorified the religion which had been the bane of humanity. It is obvious that Barmby could not understand the terms of his poetry; he only knew that he tried to justify the ways of God to man, but that he could be of the devil's party without knowing it—could never occur to him. In Barmby's view, his "Lycidas", "L'Allegro" and "Il Penseros" as well as his sonnets were good poetry but certainly not *Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Regained.* This is the limit to which such approach can take the critic because he brings in extra-literary standards for the judgment of literary pieces and so limits his responses.

It may be interesting to point out that the Owenite critics, on the other hand, over-evaluate poor writing. Robert Dale Owen, while discussing the value of poetry in a note entitled "Poetry",[3] quoted the following lines from Hannah More:

> **Since trifles make the sum of human things,**
> **And half our miseries from foibles springs,**
> **Since life's best joys consist in peace and ease**
> **A few can save or serve, but all can please**
> **Oh! let the ungentle spirit learn from hence**
> **A small unkindness is a great offence.**
> **Large bounties to bestow we wish in vain**
> **But all may shun the guilt of giving pain[4]**

1. *The New Moral World*, Vol. II (Third Enlarged Series), No. 6, 6 February 1841.
2. *ibid.* Vol. I (Third Enlarged Series), No. 25, 19 December 1840.
3. *The Crisis*, Vol. II. No. 14, 13 April 1833.
4. "Sensibility, An Epistle".

As Johnson declared to Beattie, she was a "powerful versificatrix", which opinion is borne out by these lines. These are aphoristic and the choice betrays the Owenite propagandist view of poetry even when they are talking of poetry at its best. Perhaps they did not know that however humanitarian Hannah More was, she believed in keeping the poor in their proper place. This knowledge would certainly have amended their attitude towards her poetry. Robert Dale Owen quoted the second piece, remarking, "A similar sentiment, as true as it is political, is given in Lalla Rookh":

Alas! how light a cause may move
Dissentions between hearts that love;
Hearts that the world in vain has tried,
And danger yet more closely tied;
That stood the storm, when waves were rough
Yet in a sunny hour fall off,
Like ships that have gone down at sea,
When heaven was all tranquility!
A something light as air a look,
A word unkind or wrongly taken,
Oh love, that tempests never shook,
A breath, a touch like this hath shaken.
And ruder words will soon rush in,
To spread the breach that words begin;
And eyes forget the gentle ray
They were in courtship's smiling day,
And voices lose the tone that spread
A tenderness round all they shed;
Till, fast declining, one by one,
The sweetnesses of love are gone,
And hearts, so lately mangled, seem
Like broken clouds, or like the stream
That smiling left the mountain's brow,
As though its waters ne'er could sever
Yet, e'er it reach the vail below,
Breaks into floods that part for ever![1]

This quotation also reveals the same point of view at work: It is Lalla Rookh's and Fermaroz's love for each other illustrated hereby as an episode from the life of Emperor Jahangir and the Empress Nur Jahan—the true love which culminates in marriage, in which no mundane motives play any part. As a poetic piece, it is, however, not of a very high order. Such Owenite criticism provides us with examples of stock responses, and reveals their preoccupation with *a priori* standards of judgment.

The Owenites also speculated about the function and role of poetry in the ideal-socialist state. In a review[2] of Robert Buchanan's long poem, *The Past, The Present, and The Future*, the reviewer chose to answer the criticism made in certain quarters that in the socialist society, human beings would be so much rationalized that

1. Last part of the poem, 183—208.
2. op. cit. Vol. VII (New Series), No. 79, 25 April 1840.

the arts would cease to exist. The reviewer said that if great artists were born in "the comparatively inferior circumstances of the past ages", the glorious future would no doubt give birth to still greater ones whose achievements should surpass those of their predecessors. The same point of view was displayed by Reverend Smith in a discourse, reprinted by The *Crisis*.[1] He said that the ideal state would aim at the highest possible cultivation of each individual and the creative activity would receive the greatest possible encouragement. One advantage, according to him, in a socialist society, will be that refinement of the arts and the mysteries of science would be available to all, without any invidious discrimination as found in the capitalist society. Therefore the fine arts would have a much greater number of devotees than it has hitherto been possible. These creative artists and their public would display a very high standard of attainment. He thought that it would be possible for the ordinary workers to attain these heights which had been denied to them by a corrupt society. The point that emerges here is that in the ideal society, the ideal poet will be the labour-poet, a highly cultivated and refined personality—the whole man who does his share of labour for the community and has enough leisure and means placed at his disposal by the community to contribute at the artistic and intellectual level. This will be true not only of the poets but of all the members of the ideal society. This high hope for the glorious future of poetry and the arts is also voiced by Shelley in *Prometheus Unbound*, when Prometheus creates the ideal world:

> **And lovely apparitions, dim at first,**
> **Then radiant, as the mind, arising bright**
> **From the embrace of beauty, whence the forms**
> **Of which these are the phantoms, casts on them**
> **The gathered rays which are reality,**
> **Shall visit us, the progeny immortal**
> **Of Painting, Sculpture, and rapt Poesy,**
> **And arts, the' unimagined, yet to be**
> **(III. iii—49-56).**

It might be well to present the main points that emerge from the above discussion of the Owenite view of literature and its accordance with that of Shelley's in the following form:

1. In the Owenite view, literature had always represented the noble aspirations and ideals of man. They now looked upon literature, more specifically, as an instrument of propaganda, dedicated to the service of a noble cause.

2. The ideal poet has the status of a prophet; ideal poetry teaches, inspires and ennobles. Such a poet is a greater benefactor of society than any legislator or social thinker.

1. Vol. II. No. 17, 4 May 1833.

3. Imagination is a great instrument of good; the appeal to emotion is more effective than the appeal to reason. It is the perception of the beautiful that creates empathy with the object of contemplation.

4. Ethical science gives a practical formulation to the dreams and visions of poets since aesthetics itself is a part of the science of morals.

5. The relation of drama and social good is very close. Its "societarian" effect can only be enhanced by following the Choral Theory of Drama, which admits of only one mode of characterization. The characters either must be entirely black or white; no character is to be a combination of the two. The chorus augments the "societarian" effect and must be used as frequently as possible.

6. The style and technique are not of primary importance. All communication must aim at clarity, even at the expense of artistic beauty. The craftsmanship or artistry has no value as such.

7. In practice, this point of view results in over-simplification which at times, on the one hand, leads to gross mis-interpretation of even great literature, and on the other, to the over-evaluation of poor writing. Such rigidity and pre-possession create stock-responses; such an attitude also inhibits genuine responses for reasons of *a priori* standards.

8. The Owenites were in sympathy with the romantic modes and ideals of poetry, due to their almost complete identification with Shelley's poetics.

CHAPTER 4

THE OWENITE APPRAISAL OF SHELLEY'S POETRY

The Owenites published critical articles on *Queen Mab, The Revolt of Islam* and *Prometheus Unbound.* It is my purpose in this chapter to see how far their appraisal of these poems demonstrated their view of literature which I have discussed in the last chapter. No doubt, it will be unfair to judge this criticism in the light of modern Shelley scholarship but it may, however, be interesting to study it in the context of the Shelley criticism, contemporary with that of the Owenites. It is also my purpose in this chapter to see how far they were objective in their appraisal of Shelley's poetry.

QUEEN MAB

Robert Dale Owen reviewed Queen Mab in *The Free Inquirer* of 1 January 1831.[1] The review opens as follows:

> **The framework is a poetical fable. A fairy is represented as descending in a magic car, and receiving into it the spirit of Ianthe, a beautiful and slumbering maiden. The fairy and the spirit ascend to the "Hall of Spells", whence scenes of the past, the present and the future are disclosed, rising after them in succession.**
>
> **In exhibiting the scenes of the past and the present, the poet describes, with a glowing pencil, the evils and miseries which kingcraft and priestcraft, have, from the remotest ages till now, scattered over the earth. After giving a vivid sketch of the solitary and sensual wretchedness to which a tyrant is doomed, of his worn-out pleasures and his vain regrets, he adds:**

(This is followed by a quotations: III. 85—106).

The above sets the pattern of the review.

The reviewer then refers to Shelley's "review of wretched conditions of man" and "whether such a state of things is necessary and irremediable, or incidental, and to be reformed by increasing knowledge." This is also followed by a relevant quotation: IV. 89—120. Next he mentions commerce whose baneful influence

1. Vol. 3, No. 10.

has made a certain class of men tyrannical followers of mammon and the rest wretched and pitiable. Luxury and penury, and pleasure and pain exist side by side. At this place, he quotes V. 79—121 and V. 177—196. In his view, "some of the passages, describing the frightful influence of superstition are almost, as Voltaire said of "Good Sense', 'Terrible' ". Here he quotes VII. I—48. Before referring to the possible glorious future that Shelley portrays, Robert Dale Owen invites the attention of his readers to another two major problems, of love and of belief in God. Concerning love, he says, "Shelley's morality was as heterodox as his faith", and approvingly quotes paragraphs 5 and 7 of "Even love is sold." Regarding the problem of belief in God, he quotes the following from the 'Notes': "There is no God!". "This negation, must be understood solely to affect a creative Deity, the hypothesis of a pervading spirit, co-eternal with the universe, remains unshaken". Then he commends Shelley's brilliant portrayal of the glorious future in his poetry and cites IX 57—92.

It is not difficult to see that Robert Dale Owen's analysis of the poem is a correct presentation of Shelley's views and ideals, which are synonymous with Robert Owen's. The main emphasis of Shelley and thus of this reviewer is on the need for a social revolution. To strengthen this appeal, the critic drew the readers' attention to the 'Notes', saying, "The notes appended to the poem, and which constitute perhaps its chief value, occupy more than half of the volume." It is the same Owenite point of view at work: literature as an instrument of propaganda—literature represents noblest aspirations of man. The artistic value of the poem is secondary: it is, acknowledged here by Robert Dale Owens' mention of the bright colouring of Shelley's pen at three places, but he found no need to dwell on it.

As I have discussed in the first chapter, the early nineteenth-century reformers drew inspiration from *Queen Mab*. Pirated editions came out one after the other; Richard Carlile, Henry Hetherington and Richard Moxon were prosecuted for publishing the objectionable passages. *Queen Mab* became a gospel, not only of the radicals and the Owenite but also of the Chartists. Shelley thus influenced large sections of the British people in the mid-nineteenth century.

During the late nineteenth century, the Shelley Society had raised *Queen Mab* to the skies; its members vied with each other in the eulogy of Shelley's work. Dr. Furnivall censured Buxton Forman's lenient judgment on *Queen Mab* as being too severe an estimate of the poem.[1] Bernard Shaw found it "a perfectly original poem on a

1. *Note-Book of the Shelley Society* (1888), p. 31 (*Shelley Society Publications, 1st Series, No.* 2.)

great subject."[1] In his article, "Shaming the Devil about Shelley"[2] which was actually a review of Shelley Centenary Celebrations at Horsham and St. Luke's parish in London, Shaw reported, "Some time ago Mr. H.S. Salt, in the course of a lecture on Shelley, mentioned on the authority of Mrs. Marx Aveling, who had it from her father, Karl Marx, that Shelley had inspired a good deal of that huge but badly managed popular effort called the Chartist movement." A little later in this article, he stated that *Queen Mab* was known as "The Chartists' Bible". After this he quoted Buxton Forman who had collected small, cheap copies of the poem blackened with the finger-marks, utterly spoiled, showing that these were used by working class people who could not be expected to keep them clean. For Shaw this was proof-enough that Shelley had become a power—a power that was still growing. He had so deeply influenced the workers and the left-wing intellectuals that "there is at every election a Shelleyan vote, though there is no means of counting it." In the same review, he remarked that there was no reasonable doubt that "if he had been born half a century later he would have been advocating Social-Democracy with a view to its development into the most democratic form of Communism practically attainable and maintainable." Here we have the authority of Marx himself who was quoted by Dr. E. Aveling and Eleanor Marx Aveling:

> **The real difference between Byron and Shelley is this: those who understood them and love them rejoice that Byron died at thirty six, because if he had lived he would have become a reactionary *bourgeois*. They grieve that Shelley died at twenty-nine because he was essentially a revolutionist, and he would always have been one of the advance guard of Socialism.**[3]

Marx's view of Byron is not exactly identical with that of the Owenites, but they are in agreement in finding Byron on their side in their struggle against the bourgeoisie. In the case of Shelley, they are, of course, in perfect agreement. Here it may be pointed out that the Socialism of Marx is markedly different, at least in its methods, from that of Robert Owen. Marx, however, acknowledged Owen's contribution to the development of Socialism and used some of his writings in evolving his own theory.

Frederick Engels, Marx's friend and colleague, also paid a glowing tribute to Shelley. In his analysis of the proletariat movement in England, entitled "The Condition of the Working Class in England"[4], first published in the German edition of 1845, he explained that Socialists had made successful efforts in educating

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1. *The Shelley Society Papers, Part I* (1888).
2. *The Works of Bernard Shaw*, Vol. I, London.
3. *Shelley's Socialism*, 1888.
4. Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *On Britain*, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow, 1953, p. 275.

the working classes. They read with understanding the leading philosophical, political and poetical literature of the age. The Socialists had put in their hands cheap but good translations of the works of the French Materialists like Helvetius, Holbach and Diderot. Besides, Strauss' "Life of Jesus" and Prudhon's "Property" were also read by working classes only. It was here that Engels paid this tribute to Shelley: "Shelley, the genius, the prophet, Shelley, and Byron, with his glowing sensuality and his bitter satire upon our existing society, find most of the readers in the proletariat; the bourgeoisie owns only castrated editions, family editions, cut down in accordance with the hypocritical morality of to-day". After this Engels also praised the works of Godwin and Bentham, "the two practical philosophers of England", both of whom had deeply influenced Owen as well as Shelley. As we know, many of these works were advertised in the Owenite journals themselves. We have also seen in the first chapter, how the Owenites made planned efforts to educate the workers. In the same work, Engels also noted that "The proletariat has formed upon this basis a literature, which consists chiefly of journals and pamphlets, and is far in advance of the whole bourgeois literature in intrinsic worth." This is clearly a reference to the Owenite literature.

Shelley's influence on Engels has been noted by his biographers. We learn from Edward Hallett Carr that at a very early age, Engels "attended Communist meetings where readings from Shelley and other revolutionary poets were given".[1] Gustav Mayer had told us in his biography of Engels that at the age of twenty, Engels wrote his poetic cycle, *An Evening* which he published in the *Telegraf* of August 1840, "under the characteristic motto 'To-morrow comes'— taken from Shelley whom he was trying to translate."[2] He has further told us that in those very days, Engels had started making a translation of *Queen Mab*. So much was he attracted by Shelley "because of his hatred for monarchy and Christianity".[3]

Queen Mab is the poem that caught the imagination of the youthful Engels, and most likely it was the Shelley of *Queen Mab* whom he called "the genius, the prophet". It may then be right to say that Marx also knew the Shelley of *Queen Mab* which he said was "The Chartists' Bible". It is Shelley's greatness that he was a prophet-poet not only in the opinion of the Owenites, but also that of Marx and Engels. They acknowledged his importance in the history of socialist thought and of socialist movement. *Queen Mab* not only reached the Communists from the Owenites and the Chartists, but also the Fabians and thus the Labour Party.

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1. *Karl Marx*, 1934, pp. 36—37.
2. *Friedrich Engels*, 1935, p. 23.
3. *ibid.* p. 46.

Buxton Forman included *Queen Mab* in Shelley's juvenilia and so have all the editors of his collected works afterwards. Modern critics, excepting K.N. Cameron, have not considered *Queen Mab* in the context of its influence on the development of English society. They have described its literary and intellectual sources; they have established how Shelley used his knowledge of contemporary astronomy during the flights of the fairy and the spirit; they have, following Hogg's direction, discovered its Platonism; they have even, while discussing its political and social ideas and its style and language, used it only for a fuller understanding of his later works. Technically all agree—here they have Shelley's own authority—that it is an unsuccessful poem.

What Shelley was trying to do was to write a great philosophical poem at the very early age of twenty or twenty-one. There, no doubt, he fails. The language has its elasticity and pliancy which soon, in almost each passage, either degenerates into a staccato-like rigidity or into a raving madness. Its passionate zeal, utmost sincerity and iconoclastic sweep create a rhythm that goes straight to the heart, but then at the very moment of such a profound effect comes the jerking movement which jolts the reader rather badly, thus annihilating the aesthetic effect it was trying to create. Therefore it is an uneven and on the whole, aesthetically speaking, a crude attempt, but a wonderful one all the same. So, I should, in any collected works of Shelley, put it before "Alastor" as the first serious poem of his maturity since it is extremely strong on the side of the subject matter and its influence on the destiny of mankind.

It is not my intention here to make a critical study of the poem, but a most interesting question arises and a very pertinent one in the context of this book. When all is said and done about *Queen Mab*, the fact of its profound influence on the working classes and great minds remains. In the case of great thinkers and writers like Owen, Marx, Engels and Shaw, one can see that they were using it as a great revolutionary document that epitomized the new ideas. To the ordinary workers, however, it came as a gospel. It is hard to believe that they really appreciated the revolutionary ideas it contains, if they did that would amount to saying that they could understand the *Social Contract* or *Political Justice* or *Systeme de la Nature*. In their mood of frustration and disgust what moved them was its forth-rightness, its clarity, its iconoclasm, its raving passion, and its optimism in the ultimate victory of the common man. What I have earlier said about its rhythm is its particular defect or virtue. For the sophisticated reader it is a defect which prejudices him against the poem and he could at best read it with pleasure for the sake of its ideas alone. But in the case of the unsophisticated reader, the passionate sweep of the rhythm as well as its shoddy, jerky quality are a virtue. It keeps his mind alive,

since it does administer the badly needed jolts. It enlightens him, inspires him and moves him to action. He knows what his poet wants him to do since the poem, at least from this point of view, was clearly planned and well executed.

Literature and particularly poetry, has always been part of the educational curriculum; it has always been assumed that its study enriches and cultivates the minds of the young scholars. It has no doubt given enlightenment, richness and culture to the educated classes. But it is hard to find another poem in the whole of English literature which played such an important role in the history of mankind. Is it true to say that good poetry influences the reader in a very indirect manner and any awareness that it creates is a very slow process indeed? Is it also true to say that revolutionary literature has to disregard the high artistic standards in order to achieve immediate effects? This line of argument seems to suggest that what is taken as the true function of literature is exclusively confined to the cultured *elite*. It may thus even be regarded as a bourgeois notion. It is not my purpose here to answer these questions, but the history of *Queen Mab* does raise them. So when the Owenites over-simplified their literary approach, it was actuated by nobler motives than mere lack of proper literary training, which in any case is only a matter of surmise. The Owenites regarded literature as part of morals; aesthetic values being subservient to the ethical. G.B. Shaw, in his review above referred to, emphasized that Shelley's poetry was seriously concerned with ideas and the attempts at presenting him as an immature boy or beautiful angel were merely an evasion of the real issue. At the end of the article, he urged: "If it were only to keep ourselves from premature puterfaction we must tell the truth about somebody; and I submit that Shelley has pre-eminent claims to be that somebody."[1] It is clear that Shelley or other writers must be used for the furtherance of the humanitarian cause. The artistic value becomes irrelevant. The revolutionary, no doubt, has a great natural urge to tinker with literature and thus lower its standards, if not absolutely distort its values. The answer perhaps lies in raising the general cultural level of the people, and thus maintaining the literary standards and values by recognising propaganda literature as a separate genre. Shelley's own denunciation of his *Queen Mab*, knowing full well that it was his only work that sold widely, is a case in point.

THE REVOLT OF ISLAM

The New Moral World published a series of seven critical articles (the first five on *Prometheus Unbound* and the last two on *The Revolt of Islam*) on Shelley's poetry.

1. op. cit. p. 259.

Apart from some reviews at the time of its publication, most of which were adverse, *The Revolt of Islam* did not receive any critical notice even in the articles on Shelley during the years 1822—1838. Here and there one might come across a passing reference. The poems most enthusiastically analysed are *Queen Mab* and *Prometheus Unbound*. Discussing Shelley's poetry in regard to its vagueness and thinness, *Tait's Edinburgh Magazine* said that in comparison with *Queen Mab*, *The Revolt of Islam* is still more disfigured by its allegorical tendency. Laon and Cythna are not living beings, but mere impersonations of certain modes of thought. None of the other characters stand palpably forward; they are mere names attached to vauge abstractions. The machinery of the tale is extravagant and unattractive."[1] There is also a word of praise, but immediately followed by that of censure again.

The Owenite review[2] draws upon J.A. Heraud's[3] article on Shelley in *Fraser's Magazine*,[4] in which Heraud notes Shelley's similarity with Owen in these words: "He, like, Mr. Owen, of Lanark, saw no reason why the world should not be now as it might be, let but the system which he had invented be put in act." He opens his discussion of the poem with these words: "*The Revolt of Islam* is a less mature production than the one we have just illustrated". The Owenites used this in their very first paragraph: "we shall now proceed to examine the Revolt of Islam, the largest of all Shelley's poems, but less mature, as a whole, than the one we have previously illustrated". "The previously illustrated" poem in both the cases was *Prometheus Unbound*. Heraud further says that "Of poetry as well as philosophy, there is abundance in the Revolt of Islam." The Owenite critic says the same: it has an abundance of "philosophy as well as poetry". To give another example, the Owenite critic, again following *Fraser's Magazine* appreciates Shelley's dedication of the poem to his second wife, Mary. It may also be noted that two of Heraud's criticisms against Shelley (the reference to the French Revolution and comparison with Spenser) are turned by the Owenite critic as points in Shelley's favour. The Owenite reviewer, at the very beginning, saying that it is written in the Spenserian stanza, remarks that it is "like the Fairy Queen of the inventor, allegorical and descriptive." The implication obviously is that Shelley is of the rank of Spenser and as great an artist as he.

In the second instalment of this review, the Owenite critic again said, "The speaker is Laon, who in the most exquisite versification

1. Vol II, No. 7, October 1832.
2. *The New Moral World* Vol. V. (New Series), No. 34, 15 January 1839.
3. Miriam M. H. Thrall, *Rebellious Fraser's* New York, 1934, pp. 95 and 311.
4. Vol. XVII, No. CII, June 1838.

and by the most beautiful imagery, proceeds to narrate his history as well as that of Cythna; the whole poem, as it proceeds, is a galary of such poetical beauties as I have quoted."[1] This, however, is biased criticism; the symbolical and allegorical scheme of the poem on the whole detracts from its value. The first two cantos, beautiful in themselves, could as well have been omitted. The woman who guides the poet, the fable of the serpent and the eagle, and the description of the 'Temple' and the 'Hall of Immortals', are not perfectly integrated into the structure of the poem. They are no doubt related to it, but perhaps a more masterly plan which must have shortened the poem somewhat, would have achieved better results. The poem as it is depicts two main styles in which Shelley wrote: the quasi-symbolic, particularly of the two first cantos, and the realistic in which he describes the actual struggle of Laon and Cythna. No doubt some passages are marvellously beautiful, for example, the scene describing the free love of the hero and the heroine. The poem, on the whole, is repetitive, tedious and overlong. But the temper of the poem is different from that of *Queen Mab* which deals more or less with the same theme. It demonstrates Shelley's search for his true medium which he discovered in *Promatheus Unbound*. However, it is one of Shelley's major poems. The Owenites, are the first, apart perhaps from Leigh Hunt, to record this as a critical judgment.

In the first article on *The Revolt of Islam*, the reviewer after mentioning its artistic merit, goes on to hold up to the public the noble life of Shelley. Quite up to expectations, there is no "chatter about Harriet". According to the Owenite principles of love and marriage, which they had derived from Shelley himself, Shelley was perfectly justified to separate from a woman he no longer loved. It was then her own fault or that of the society that she decided to pass beyond the veil of life. It has now been established by Shelley's biographers beyond any doubt that Harriet died broken hearted. It is difficult to say how the Owenites would have looked at it had they been convinced of the fact. It was enough for them that Shelley provided them with intellectual authority and that Mary was the daughter of celebrated parents, both of whom again were their common sources of ideas. That is why the reviewer quoted stanza 7 which represents Mary's idealism and nobility as well as her union with Shelley.

I do not intend to go into biographical details, but it could, however, be said with confidence that during the whole unfortunate separation from Harriet, she doubtless showed a nobler conduct than Shelley's. It was she who rose above herself as her last letter to her sister reveals. Shelley, on the othr hand, could never see that he could be wrong. His letter to her shows that his appeals

1. Vol. V. (New Series), No. 35, 22 June 1839.

to her generosity of spirit and the demand to rise to the greatness of the occasion could only proceed from a belief in one's righteous conduct. And according to his mistaken belief, he went to the extent of falsely accusing her of adultery.

Talking of the dedication, the reviewer quoted stanzas 3, 4 and 5 from it, in which appears Shelley's early vow to be "wise, And just, and free, and mild.. ". The Owenite reference to the 'Dedication' also mentions, and quite correctly, that much of Shelley's hatred of oppression rose from the unjust and cruel treatment he received at Brentford and then at Eton.

The reviewer next goes on to say: "The design and scope of the Revolt of Islam can be best told in his own words, in the preface; the composition of which proves that he could write prose as well as poetry". Surely he was one of the best prose-writers of the age. Here are cited from Shelley's Preface: paragraphs I and II (up to the line: "Such is the series of delineations of which the Poem consists") and paragraph III (from the beginning till: "and falsehood the worst features of its deformity") and paragraph IV (from the line: "If the revolution had been in every respect prosperous," till the end of the paragraph). These extracts are quoted to explain the purpose and theme of the poem.

It is a revolutionary poem in which two great minds, nurtured on the best education and noble idealism, try to change the world and fail. The French Revolution and its failure is the inspiration behind the poem. In both cases, the minds of the large majority of the people were not sufficiently cultivated to reap the fruits of victory, the counter revolution succeeds because of the stupidity of the general masses. In the case of the French Revolution, the failure was equally due to the inability of some of its leaders, for they lacked in real wisdom and virtue. As we have seen in Chapter 2, both Owen and Shelley shared this interpretation of the failure of the French Revolution. They also showed great concern to dispel the gloom caused by this failure, and explained, that in future they could avoid the mistakes made by the leaders of the French Revolution but that a revolution, though a peaceful one, was necessary all the same.

After this comes the actual discussion of the poem:

The loves of Laon and Cythna are introduced by a typical canto, wherein the poet is represented, first as plunged in despair, because of the failure of 'the last hope of France', and next scaling a sea-based promontory at sunrise. A storm arises, thus described in the following stanza :

(Here is quoted I, iii). The reviewer then gives a romantic description of the fight between the eagle and the serpent, and the meeting of the

poet with the beautiful lady who invites him" to bear her and the serpent company in the little boat". This is followed by a quotation from the poem: I,xxv—xxvIII. and I.xxxI—xxxIII. This descriptive note. as well as the stanzas quoted, apart from their purpose of dispelling the gloom spread by the failure of the French Revolution, also represent the Owenite sympathy with romantic literature. They encourage their readers and their poets read and write such poetry. The purpose of the strange lady's speech in the above stanzas is to explain that the world is ruled by two powers, "Twin Genii, equal Gods" or "A blood red comet and the Morning Star", the archetype of Good and Evil as represented by Abel and Cain. Historically speaking. the spirit of evil triumphed over that of good since it was constituted by "king and lord and God". But the spirit of Good has been equally assertive. It is for man to understand what is good, and then to will and achieve it. This theory of history and revolution, as we have seen in Chapter 2, was held both by Owen and Shelley.

It may be noted that this interpretation of the stanzas discussed is quite straightforward. It does not go into the question of tracing the symbols and pinning down their historical and literary associations as later scholars have done. Nor does this analysis take into consideration the mysticism in these stanzas. It also shows complete indifference to the attempts that were later made by scholars to trace Platonism in the poem. The Owenite criticism concerns itself with presenting a somewhat slanted, but simple exposition of the story of the poem.

The second article on *The Revolt of Islam* continues the story of the strange, beautiful woman. The reviewer goes on to describe how a dying poet gave Cythna books on which she nurtured her mind. The strange woman and the poet then reach a Temple and stanzas I.xIi and xI describe its marvellous beauty. The Temple is esoteric and supernatural, and the Owenites allow their readers to enjoy such enchanting descriptions. So are the stanzas Iii and Iii. But then he comes to the real point, the source of enlightenment:

> **......thereby**
> **Paintings, the poesy of mightiest thought**
> **Which did the spirit's history display**
> **A tale of passionate change, divinely taught,**
> **Which, in their winged dance, unconscious genii wrought.**
> **(I. Iiii. 5—9).**

Thus ends the analysis of canto I.

The reviewer continues the above story: "Laon was a native of Argolis, subjected to imaginative influence, strongly opposed to tyranny; he had witnessed its baneful results". (This can truly be

said of Shelley as well). Then is quoted II.xlii. 8—9 and II.xliii. This brings up another important theme of the poem—the equality of man and woman and free love, even between a brother and a sister. The whole idea behind Shelley's campaign against the institution of marriage was that it had stultified life, besides creating misery and crime. Freedom in love and marriage (both of contracting and dissolving it) liberates the mind, and the energy that it releases could be devoted to humanitation causes—objects outside of one's own personality. Therefore Laon and Cythna, hand in hand, foster a revolution to create a new world. This is what the Owenites stood for, and preached again and again, citing the line: "Can man be free if woman be a slave?"

After the failure of the revolution, the hermit appears on the scene to save Laon. This hermit belongs to the class of Ahaseurus, who is the benefacter of mankind. He is the eternal saviour of the revolutionary, the epitome of the spirit of rebellion and of good. Shelley used this character in various forms and situations. It first entered his poetry as a Wandering Jew; he is the important part of the spirit and theme of *Queen Mab*, "Prince Athanase", *Hellas* and perhaps *Prometheus Unbound* in the character of Demogorgon. The Owenites do not question such *deus ex machina*. Even the Law of Necessity did not fully explain how the revolutionary idea was born, though once it was conceived by a mind it changed or should have changed, the sorry scheme of things entirely. Owen himself explained that certain early circumstances of his life over which he had no control had suggested the revolutionary ideas to him. Anyway the poem as it was exactly suited their purpose, and, as we have seen, at various places in this book, the Owenites did not raise irrelevant questions.

The reviewer then reproduces stanzas X,XI., XII. 1—3 from canto V. These illustrate the viewpoint of both Owen and Shelley as regards the military profession and war. War had been created by the imperialist-tyrants for further land-grabbing, with a view to adding to their luxury and comfort. They had created a whole mystique of war such as makes the young Rostov in *War and Peace* enraptured about the emperor. Human goodness was exploited in the name of patriotism and religion. Soldiers are hired men, they kill, not knowing whom and why they kill, but as Laon said: "even the slaves who kill for hire, are men; revenge is immoral since they know not what they did". They could only be pitied and forgiven. So Laon at great risk of his life, sets up the example of human love by rushing in between the killer and his victim and receives a gushing wound in his arm. He could then say effectively from a position of moral strength:

> **Join, then your hands and hearts, and let the past**
> **Be as a grave which gives not up its dead**
> **To evil thoughts.** (V. xii).

The reviewer then cites V.xx. 8-xxiv., 3 which present the picture of the fallen king dying on the foot-steps of his throne. He is completely helpless and miserable, reduced to nothingness and has even to beg for food.

> **And he was troubled at a charm withdrawn**
> **Thus suddenly that sceptres ruled no more**
> **That even from gold the dreadful strength was gone,**
> **Whileom once made all things subject to its power—**
> **(V. xxviii).**

The multitude acting on the principle of revenge demands Othman's blood but Laon "delivers the following eloquent rebuke in reply to their cry of blood". Here are reproduced V. xxxiii—xxxiv, which remind us of the language of scriptures. Finally,

> **a pyramid for an alter of federation has been erected, and a veiled female shape is seated beside it on an ivory throne. The vast multitude congregates round the base of the great alter. It is Laone or Cythna that is veiled, and who sings that splendid ode to equality, part of which may be found in the Social hymn book beginning with, "Calm art thou as yon sunset", and "Eldest of things, divine equality".**

This paean to liberty celebrates the end of the dark history of man, "Faith, and Folly. Custom and Hell, and Mortal Melancholy" are dead. This new era, the rule of Wisdom sets in—the dreams of the poets and thinkers are realized. Scorn, hate, revenge and selfishness are no more the determinants of human action, but pity and peace and love. It is Divine Equality, with Wisdom and Love as its attendants, that gives a new shape to things. It is the second birth of mankind. Men and Women are now free to realize themselves in higher pursuits as well as "man and woman, their common bondage burst, may freely borrow from Lawless love a solace for their sorrow." Shelley's language and flight here in this song are indistinguishable from the style and visionary dreams of Owen who unlike Shelley, chose at places to soar in his prose and lectures.

The review of *The Revolt of Islam* ends on this triumphal note, and the last paragraph, as quoted above, suggests that it was intentional. The rest of the poem, it may be said, from the Owenite point of view, did not matter much, since it deals with counter-revolution and the failure of the revolutionaries. But canto VI contains the ideal picture of free love (of Laon and Cythna) which the Owenites might well have used as a specimen of noble love. So could have the last canto which raises it to spiritual level.

PROMETHEUS UNBOUND

The first[1] of the critical articles on *Prometheus Unbound*, a part of which is introductory, appeared in *The New Moral World* of

1. Vol. V. (New Series) No. 6.

1 December 1838. Rightly, and quite in agreement with the rest of the critical opinion, it is taken as the greatest work of Shelley:

The most finished and masterly production of his genius, is generally considered to be "Prometheus unbound" (*Sic*), written in the style and with the spirit of Greek tragedians. It may be considered as an attempt to supply the lost drama of Eschylus, only that the deliverance of Prometheus from bondage, is achieved by Shelley in different and more unexceptionable manner than that of the Grecian bard. It is a splendid allegorical poem, requiring considerable study to be clearly understood.

The Owenites found themselves, in the case of this poem, in a happier position *vis-a-vis* the general critical opinion. *Queen Mab* was vulnerable to critical attacks, and its violence provoked hostility. *The Revolt of Islam*, as we have seen, was hardly taken as Shelley's major poem. So, *Prometheus Unbound* which dealt, more or less, with the same theme and on a recognized higher artistic level, obviously served their purpose better. No doubt, *Queen Mab* was more useful for the purpose of propaganda, yet *Prometheus Unbound* was another weapon in their arsenal for their fight against reaction and conservatism, particularly for meeting the literary high-brows on their own ground.

Shelley himself said in his preface to *Prometheus Unbound*, that although he modelled his play after that of Aeschylus, he interpreted the myth of Prometheus in his own manner, just as the master had used it from his own point of view. It is supposed that the Prometheus of Aeschylus entered into a truce with Jupiter. In the first part of his trilogy, though lost like the third, Aeschylus had apparently presented Prometheus as having stolen fire from heavens for the service of man. In the third part, it has been inferred from the fragments and other indications that he brought about a reconciliation of the two gods. At the request of Heracles, Zeus consented to let the wounded centaur, Chiron, die in place of Prometheus whom he then unbound. Prometheus revealed his secret, and Jupiter hearing the prophecy that if he married Thetis, he should beget a son mightier than himself, married her to Peleus, and thus the danger was averted. Shelley, however, could never think of such a solution. He could not be content with less than the total rout of the tyrant. Once Prometheus was able to cast out hate altogether from his mind, he conquered the Universe through Love that rules Necessity.

Shelley's interpretation of Prometheus's character was appreciated by the Owenite as well as the general critical opinion. John Barmby paid this tribute to Shelley in his series of articles on the stage: "Aeschlus wrote seventy tragedies, only seven of which are extant, and perhaps happily for his fame; among those lost was the celebrated Prometheus Unbound, which has been so gloriously

supplied by Shelley, with the additional lustre of his own mind".[1] *Tait's Edinburgh Magazine* voiced this general critical opinion: "It is indeed a gigantic work, worthy from the might and magnitude of its conceptions, to rank beside Aeschylus".[2] Shelley had thus written a play considered to be as great as that of Aesochylus by his independent use of the myth of Prometheus. His treatment of Prometheus invests him with human aspiration, and makes him a symbol of the revolutionary-philanthropist. He becomes a power that stands for the progress of human mind, both in science and the arts.

After recording their appreciation of its greatness as a work of art, the Owenite article further says:

> **Prometheus represented as chained to a rock, is the type of mankind bound to imperfect social arrangements by tyranny and superstition, which is represented in the character of Jupiter. Their endeavours, and the perseverance they exhibited to ameliorate their condition, by the invention of arts and sciences, and the establishment of improved social institutions, are represented by the struggles and the indomitable will of Prometheus.**

Prometheus thus is rightly interpreted to be representing the progressive forces of humanity, in the larger sense. In the contemporary setting, it stands for the intellectuals and the radicals opposing the power of a Castlereagh or a Philpotts. The Owenite point of view was shared by the periodical criticism of the age, irrespective of their political affiliations. The magazines I have above referred to, besides a few others, agreed that Shelley, whatever his faults, did a service in raising his voice against the priests and the kings. The voice was so effective that he had either his friends or his enemies, and those litterateurs who wanted to steer clear of politics acknowledged the fact in their own dispassionate manner. Nobody differed from the Owenites when they said that Jupiter presented "that persecuting and intolerant spirit of religious warfare which had made the earth a pandemonium". Here, the review quoted these lines from Shelley's preface: "Prometheus.... as it were, a type of the highest perfection of moral and intellectual nature, impelled by the purest and the truest motives to the best and noblest ends, and exempt from every ambition, or revenge."

The actual poem, the critic says begins by representing Prometheus chained to the precipice, and Panthes and Ione seated at his feet." Here are cited: I.1—30, which describe Prometheus's condition in relation to Jupiter; and I. 49—73 in which Prometheus wants Jupiter whose soul "will gape like a hell within." He also pities to recall the curse he once breathed on him, but the tone is

1. op. cit. Vol. I (Third Enlarged Series), No. 19, 7 November 1840.
2. No. 9 December 1832.

more of grief than of animosity. After this are quoted I. 107—255 in which is shown the misery that Jupiter has spread in the world and the role that Prometheus is performing in ending it. The whole universe shares this desire. Then the Phantasm of Jupiter is called up to repeat the curse.

The second article of this series[1] opens with the reproduction of the curse which Prometheus announces:

> **It doth repent me: words are quick and vain;**
> **Grief for a while is blind, and so was mine—**
> **I wish no living thing to suffer pain.**
> **(I.i.).**

This was exactly synonymous with the Owenite teachings. Prometheus not only cannot use violence, but he also renounces hatred and contempt for his enemy. The revolution can be brought about by love alone. *Queen Mab* incites the reader to violence and *The Revolt of Islam* portrays violent struggle between the contending parties, but *Promotheus Unbound* preaches love as an instrument in the achievement of the glorious world. So long a Prometheus was not able to forgive his enemy, he could not move the forces of nature to come to his aid, but now after renouncing his curse, he sets the whole machinery of the universe to the achieving of the good. The Owenite comment, therefore, pays him homage for rising to this level: "Here spoke the philanthropist, and in Prometheus, Shelley spoke the feelings of his own benevolent bosom. . . .And here we have him recalling his curse, so as the human race might not continue to suffer with him the wrath of this malignant duty." [Sic].

Next Prometheus is visited by Mercury, together with four Furies, who tells him to yield to the power of Jupiter, because otherwise he might have to suffer great punishment and pain. Prometheus, however, remains inflexible "to oppose the tyranny of heaven, the demon of superstition." Here the reviewer quotes I.410—457. The extract opens with Mercury's request to Prometheus:

> **Oh, that we might be spared; I to inflict,**
> **And they to suffer! Once more answer me:**
> **Thou knowest not the period of Jove's power?**

He refuses the luring offer of a life of "voluptuous joy" in heaven. He is defiant and self-confident, he is the liberator, the revolutionary and the philanthropist whereas Mercury is the stooge of the tyrannous power. As a lackey, he is condemned to carry out the most abhorrent orders against his own conscience, yet he has sufficient humanity to feel remorse at what he is doing and be ashamed of himself. He represents those people who do not support evil, but lack the will to

1. op.cit. No. 7, 8 December 1838.

oppose it. His words betray his confusion and even a sort of conflict:

> **I must obey his words and thine; alas!**
> **Most heavily remorse hangs at my heart!**

Mercury acquiesces in evil, whereas Prometheus had enough courage to curse evil, though he has now risen to a higher level of love and forgiveness.

The furies represent the tormenting thoughts—images of the aftermath of the French Revolution. They might as well stand for the actual tormentors employed by the established authority to inflict torture on the political prisoners. The speech of the first fury is symbolic both of the tormenting lackeys and of the thoughts that rack the brain.

> **We are the ministers of pain, and fear,'**
> **And disappointment, and mistrut, and hate,**
> **And clinging crime. And, as lean dogs pursue,**
> **Thro' wood and lake, some struck and sobbing fawn,**
> ***We track all things that weep, and bleed, and live,***
> ***When the great king betrays them to our will.***

Then are cited I.605—634. They refer to the emblem of Christ on the cross, who died for the sake of humanity. The followers of Christ, it is quite ironical as well as utterly demoralising, persecute those who actually follow his teachings, who try to create a just brotherhood of man on this earth. Shelley had feelings of hostility towards Christianity till the end of his life, whatever some critics might apologisingly say by way of a more respectable interpretation for the orthodox. His attitude towards Christ no doubt underwent a change. In the 'Notes' to *Queen Mab*, he called him an ambitious man who had his eye on the throne of Judea, but later in the rest of his writings, he showed great respect for his personal life and the ideals for which he stood. He came to believe that Christ had nothing to do with institutionalized Christianity. But the words here addressed to him:

> **Thy name I will not speak,**
> **It hath become a curse.**

in my opinion, betray by their emotional overtone a confusion in Shelley's mind regarding his attitude towards Christ. I should think that whatever his mistaken followers might have done to tarnish his name, if Shelley felt genuine respect for him, he would not say that his name had become a 'curse', it is too strong a word to use.

The speech of the fury (II. 618—631) continues the political theme. The leaders of men by their cruelties and tyrannous persecution of the benefactors of humanity created terror and fear in the hearts of the people so that they now cannot think of rising against the evil. They have also perhaps lost the sense of injustice and wrong.

Thus by creating such a confusion in the hearts and minds of the people, the authority maintains the *status quo*. The lines—

> **The good want power, but to weep barren tears.**
> **The powerful goodness want: worse need for them,**
> **The wise want love and those who love want wisdom;**
> **And all best things are thus confused to ill.**

raise the problem to a very high artistic level. The lines immediately preceding and following them are on a mediocre plane where the analysis of this human predicament is presented in a direct and straightforward manner and the voice has a strong ring of the propagandist. Here in these four lines is a comprehensiveness, a richness of experience, a profound understanding of the problem as not merely a contemporary evil but a human dilemma in the historical sense—this lends dignity to the tone. The language here communicates the sense of the poet's profound concern as well as his cool, objective understanding. This is beautiful poetry. Critics have noted the correspondence between these lines and the following two lines from Yeats's "The Second Coming":

> **The best lack all conviction, while the worst**
> **Are full of passionate intensity.**

The third article[1] on *Prometheus Unbound* appeared on 22 December, 1838. It begins, after a brief recapitulation of the previous articles, with a succinct discussion of the role of the spirits, "Who sing lays of hopes, and anthems of fair prophecy, which, they say, begin and end in Prometheus; as in his endurance, and the patience with which he bears suffering, is an earnest sign of the final triumph." The Owenites have correctly read the symbolic meaning of the Spirits. They stand for the eternal hope in the breast of man; collectively, they are the light of hope and faith, of reason and good. They counterbalance the gloom and the haunting torments created by the perpetual victory of evil and recently by the defeat of the French Revolution and the success of Napoleonic wars. They recreate the passion of man for the achievement of good:

> **Thence we bear the prophecy**
> **Which begins and ends in thee!**

It may not be irrelevant to discuss here the meaning of the sixth spirit's song which is not clear. It is about desolation that works subtly, corroding people's hearts, treading with "killing footsteps". One also understands what Shelley means by "and fans with silent wing. The tender hopes which in their hearts the best and gentlest bear". But the language is here strained to mean that desolation strengthens men's hopes in an indirect way by presenting a challenge to them. After this I think II. 776—780, though one can understand their meaning from the context, are a muddle. The best and the

1. op.cit. No. 9.

gentlest are lulled into false repose (perhaps Shelley wants to say that it deceives people). But how do Desolation's "soft and busy feet" create "music stirring motion?" How do people then "Dream visions of aerial joy?" Shelley appears to have again stretched the meaning of the words he is using too far. Does he want to say that Desolation presents itself in such a subtly beautiful, and charmingly deceptive manner that people might mistake it for "love" and then are bound to get pain? Or does he want to say that Desolation quickly comes to them as an emotional experience of sterility, since being idealists they are likely to be highly disappointed? Then why does he call "the monster, Love?" I think Shelley has been particularly unhappy in personifying "Desolation" and building the whole complex of experience around it. It is a good example of his lack of concern with the precise meaning of words; his language never has the plastic quality that is largely responsible for lending clarity to the symbols that a poet uses. His words rush along in a musical sweep, sometimes becoming even meaningles. As against this song, the Chorus of the Spirits is clear, here the image built round Ruin, though tenuous and thin, is at least clear in its outline. The final Chorus of the Spirits is much better poetry, though here too images are heaped upon each other.

The discussion of Act II begins as follows:

The next opens with a very beautiful soliloquy by Asia, in which she apostrophizes Spring, and describes the scene around, when Panthea enters, and relates a dream or vision she had, wherein she beheld the pale worn out limbs fall from Prometheus, and replaced by others of the most perfect symmetry, his countenance changed from woe into the sweet and lovely expression, and his whole frame become radiant with glory. While they are thus engaged, voices are heard singing at the sound of which ASIA exclaims:

Here are cited II. 171—208. Asia asks Panthea to listen to the spirits and whether they should follow them. They are repeatedly told to follow them through the hollow caverns. The Spirits make two prophesies:

In the world unknown
Sleeps a voice unspoken;
By thy step alone
Can its rest be broken
Child of Ocean!

That is to say, Demogorgon can be set into motion by Asia alone; it is Love that rules Necessity. The second prophecy is about the re-union of Asia and Prometheus:

To the rents, and gulphs, and chasms
Where the Earth reposed from spasms,
On the day when He and thou
Parted, to commingle now;
Child of Ocean!

Then the reviewer quotes III. 1—53, Asia and Panthea following "the mysterious calling of the voices, "are led into" the realms of Demogorgon." The reviewer calls it a "splendid dialogue, most poetical in all its parts." The observation is no doubt correct.

The above quotation from the Owenite article first mentions Asia's apostrophe to Spring. In fact, the whole of Act II opens and ends with Spring, the regeneration of mankind. Panthea's second dream represents the whole symbolic framework that Shelley builds round Spring in this act:

Methought
As we sat here, the flower-infolding buds
Burst on yon lightning-blasted almond-tree,
When swift from the white Scythian Wilderness
A wind swept forth wrinkling the earth with frost:
I looked, and all the blossoms were blown down;
But on each leaf was stamped, as the blue bells
Of Hyacinth tell Apollo's grief
O, FOLLOW, FOLLOW!

The Spring has come, but still the wind from the wilderness is strong enough to blast the buds that are ripening. It needs the blessings of Necessity guided by the spirit of Love before the world could enjoy the eternal Spring. This is the prophecy of things to come, which is being fulfilled.

The Owenites, as was expected, missed the Platonic significance of Prometheus's relationships with the female characters in the play. They do not show their understanding of the fact that the romance of Prometheus and Asia is a symbolic representation of ideal love between man and woman, representing all Shelley had to say on the subject of love. It is Platonic love in which the spiritual element determines the nature and character of the relationship. The revolutionary thought, as in the case of *The Revolt of Islam*, is given by man, but its realization can be achieved by woman alone, who is the soul mate of man. Prometheus conquers Jupiter with the help of Asia, who is love. Prometheus and Asia are thus the ideal hero and heroine of Shelley's conception. The Owenite criticism does not also mention the scene of ecstatic love between Prometheus and Panthea, wrought out in most beautiful language. It was typical of Shelley to create this perfect dream union between brother and sister. Together with this is depicted the same ecstatic union between the sisters—Panthea and Ione—Faith and Hope.

Shelley is at his best in these three scenes, the first and the second scenes are definitely poetry of a high order. The feeling of joy in this new birth of mankind is rapturous lyricism that soars high into the realm of future possibilities. The song by becoming vague does not lose in value, perhaps its value is enhanced here,

since what Shelley is talking of is indefinite. The two beautiful lyrics, "O FOLLOW, FOLLOW" and "To the deep, to the deep," are great poetry which Shelley alone could write. They combine lyricism, ecstasy, and prophecy, unencumbered by the fear of Evil.

The reviewer next quotes II.iv. 1—34, with this comment: "We have for the next scene the cave of Demogorgon, whither Asia and Panthea have been conveyed by Spirits, and there the great secret of the conquest of Prometheus over his oppressor is to be revealed." In these lines Asia asks Demogorgon, the formless, mighty spirit—who made the universe and who rules over it? Demogorgon's answer when Asia points out evil in the scheme of things becomes evasive, he merely says: "He reigns" instead of the clear reply: "God; Almighty God." After this Asia delivers a long lecture on the ideals and the role of Prometheus as well as the evil rule of Jupiter. It is Prometheus who gave him wisdom which was his strength, but he betrayed the trust reposed in him.

"To know not faith, nor love, nor law;
To be omnipotent but friendless is to reign."

If Demogorgon is the mighty Spirit of the universe, then this long harangue for his education is unnecessary. This is, of course, meant for the education of the reader. As such it is a structural defect in the development of the play. Here the question arises as to who is the creator of evil. Prometheus was mightier than Jupiter, he helped him to his throne and gave him wisdom. Jupiter is terribly afraid of the secret that Prometheus possesses "If Jove is the supreme of living things." then why

> **"All spirits are enslaved which serve evil things:
> Thou knowest if Jupiter be such or no".**

The veil has been lifted but "the deep truth is imageless."

Nobody has given a satisfactory answer to the question that Asia has raised nor could it be expected of Shelley. However, the explanation advanced by Demogorgon has a double weakness; as a philosophy that Shelley is evolving, it is confusing and contradictory; secondly, artistically it is unsatisfying in so far as the precise roles and powers of these mighty titans and spirits are not clearly determined. We know that Shelley is drawing upon Plato's myth of Er in which the souls in choosing their new destiny are safe from the erratic hand of chance in commensuration with their spiritual development, measured by the degree of their worship of Venus Uranus. This concept of 'Love', however, is not very clear in *The Republic*. Shelley taking Plato as a whole brings his understanding of the role of Love from *The Dialogues*. Shelley is thus trying to

combine here Plato's myth of Er and theory of Love with the myth of Prometheus together with Godwinian Necessity and the contemporary radical movement. The result is only an honest protrayal of his own confusion. This speculative infirmity injures the artistic value of the poem. The Owenites, however did not look at the problem in this manner; they brought to bear on it their own point of view. They do not question the metaphysical basis of the problem; they accept Plato's Love in their own terms of 'Charity'; ignoring the myth of Er, taking it as a mere hook like the myth of Prometheus on which to hang the tale of human misery.

And thus Demogorgon refers her to her own heart for a better god than can be given by natural theologians. With these Nature and Deity are interchangeable terms. Shelley represents the deity of vulgar worship, as the author of "Terror, madness, crime etc.," and of "hell, or the sharp fear of hell," and the unknown power that directs the atom and the aggregate of worlds, as a "merciful God" thus here personified, and the imaginary and the vindictive deity of the theologians and then, high above every vulgar idol, he, enthroned eternal love, beyond the power of fate, time, occasion, chance, or change. Jove, the purifier of every heart, the blend and effective governor of all things, whose potent influence must and shall regenerate the world.

This is quite an oversimplification of Shelley, besides misreading him in that Jove, who in Shelley's lines is another name for Jupiter, is taken for the mysterious power of Nature. Asia agrees with Demogorgon's answer that deep truth is imageless. This is Plato, pure and simple, but the veil has been lifted for Asia since the spirits have guided her through the deep caverns of thought. She again sees the change that is coming. After citing II. 121—132, the Owenites quote II. 140—148 which show the universe preparing for the great change.

The next instalment[1] of the series of articles on *Prometheus Unbound* came out on 5 January, 1839. It opens with the discussion of Act III in which Japiter is shown surrounded by the gods. He is quite elated by the prospect of his invincible strength that his child from Thetis would lend him. This shows how Shelley was at sea as regards the metaphysical basis of the problem. If Jupiter is the supreme ruler how is his offspring going to be greater than he? Similarly why, a little later, does Demogorgon descend into the darkness together with Jupiter? The Owenites do not go into these questions. Their interpretation is strictly guided by the political symbolism of the play. They remark here, and quite correctly, that the rule of superstition and lust for power is over. With the arrival of the car of the Hour, the New Moral World sets in. This is the second-coming. Jupiter sinks into the abyss which fact is announced by Ocean in the next scene (I. 10). After citing this line, the article reproduces III.II.18—50., in which Ocean tells Apollo of the changes

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1. op.cit. No. 11.

in his own realm. Next Hercules unbinds Prometheus who thus announces the moral of the tale:

> **Most glorious among spirits, thus doth strength**
> **To wisdom, courage, and long-suffering love,**
> **And thee, who art the form they animate,**
> **Minister like a slave."**

It is now time to go into the question of Shelley's Platonism *vis-a-vis* the Owenites. The best statement of the Owenite attitude towards Plato is found in 'Notes' to Canto I of Robert Buchanan's long poem, *The Past, The Present and The Future*.[1] According to him, Plato gave a systematic form to the teachings of Socrates. He, however, mixed them up with ingenious speculations and imaginary principles that in his view could unite man with the Divine Being. He attributed imaginary virtues and qualities to man. Therefore "In his system the most generally received opinions respecting the nature of knowledge are completely inverted....The theory of Plato, respecting the origin of evil, is also very ingenious." Nevertheless, Robert Buchanan acknowledged Plato's contribution to the development of liberal ideas on society and politics. As we have seen in Chapter 2, the Owenites knew that Plato's *Republic* had made a great contribution to the later development of the concept of perfectibility, as well as the eradication of evil by progressive education and wise administration of the state. Some scholars have traced a line of influence coming down to the French Encyclopaedists, culminating in Godwin so far as our present discussion is concerned.

In spite of this knowledge of Plato's indirect contribution to the development of socialist thought, the Owenites did not anywhere in their writings, discuss Shelley in relation to Plato. The contemporary periodical literature equally ignores the question. Platonism might have made Shelley a better poet, but it certainly did not win him any popularity with his audience; it perhaps strengthened the prejudice against him since he chose Plato instead of Christ. *Fraser's Magazine* made a brief reference to Shelley's Platonism in June 1831, but in the issue from which I have already quoted above, Heraud discusses it in some detail. He says that the philosophy of both Plato and Shelley is open to the charge of apparent atheism whereas they were in fact theists—"a conclusion corroborated by the indisputable fact, that both of them were not only in their several ways the most sublime of poets, but among the best of virtuous men". Heraud's discussion of Shelley's Platonism is in a way tactful and critical. Modern criticism, on the other hand, stresses Shelley's Platonism with great approval and appreciation. Some critics have even exaggerated its importance in Shelley's poetry. Professor Notopoulos, for example, is of the view: "*Prometheus*

1. *The New Moral World*, Vol. IV, No. 185, 12 May 1838.

Unbound marks the fruition of the development of Shelley's Platonism. In this poem, Platonism supplants the poetically unsatisfying eighteenth century materialistic philosophy."[1] But *Prometheus Unbound*, as I have said above, is Shelley's attempt at the artistic fusion of the Godwinian interpretation of the French Materialists, Platonism and the radical movement of his own day. It is the political symbolism that helps the plot develop, and it is the political symbolism that the Owenite criticism emphasizes.

Allied to Platonism is the question of the symbolism of Shelley's poetry. The Owenite critic, as I have just said, reads the political symbolism correctly and ignores the question of symbolism as such. Prometheus, Jupiter, Asia, Spirits and Furies are identified by them, and beyond this they do not worry. The interpretation of the symbolic value of the Spirits as hope and idealism in the human mind, as well as the Furies as the tormenting thoughts of remorse and desolation, is the border line between the Owenite and the Platonic interpretation of symbols. The dark "caverns" of human thought, the "boat" as the human soul, and even Asia as "intellectual beauty" do not mean much to them.

W.B. Yeats's essay, "The Philosophy of Shelley's Poetry"[2] is a landmark of criticism in this connection. Criticising a learned scholar (Dowden) Yeats said that *Prometheus Unbound* was not merely Godwin's "*Political Justice* put into rhyme" and repeated Mary Shelley's remark regarding "the mystic meanings scattered throughout the poem." He emphasized that symbolism is part of the method and technique of a poet of essences, shadows, and twilights. Unlike th Owenites, modern scholars have analysed not only the political, but also the Platonic, the philosophical and the scientific value of Shelley's symbols.

To return to the Owenite article, it now describes the joy of the universe at the liberation of Prometheus which introduces the millennium:

> **And now, in the most exquisite verses a flood of joy is poured forth by Prometheus, Jove, the Spirit of the Hour, and the Earth, during which the Titan directs the Spirit of the Hour to take the curved shell, "which Porteus old made Asiaa's (*Sic*) nuptial boon "; and passing over the cities of mankind to breathe into it, and loose "its mighty music", as a "voice was to be accomplished".**

Lines III.iii. 40—60 show Shelley's command of language, his power of control and concentration in describing the birth of the new world in which cultural pursuits will afford the greatest joy to human beings. It is possible since "veil by veil, evil and error

1. *Platonism of Shelley*, p. 232.
2. *Ideas of Good and Evil* 1903, p. 118.

fall". It may, however, be pointed out that the inclusion of Jove in the leading characters of the new world is simply a confusion in the Owenite interpretation to which I have already referred above. "In the next scene, the poet introduces us to a new character, in the Spirit of the Earth, who it seems e'er Jove reigned, loved Asia, and now tells of the world's renovation, and how all things had put off their evil natures, in the following beautiful passage". (Here are quoted: III.iv. 31—71). They describe the new change: how all the ugly things are transformed into lovely forms:

> **Those ugly human shapes, and visages,**
> **Of which I spoke as having wrought me pain,**
> **Past floating thro' the air, and fading still**
> **Into the winds that scattered them and those**
> **From whom they passed seemed mild and lovely forms,**
> **After some foul disguise had fallen, and all**
> **Were somewhat changed;**

Then the reviewer mentions the arrival of the Spirit of the Hour who announces:

> **Soon as the sound had ceased where thunder filled**
> **The abysses of the sky and the wide air,**
> **There was a change:**

This is followed by IV.iv. 128—196. The quotation presents the picture of the ideal state after Godwin's pattern. Men have undergone a change in that the passion to rule has ended and a state of equality is established. Women too, have been emancipated, they can henceforth have the joy of love and life without having recourse to hypocrisy and pretence. In short, kingcraft and priestcraft have died for good. The painted veil has now been torn aside; men know the truth; evil and error are eradicated. And the man remains:

> **Sceptreless, free, uncircumscribed; but man,**
> **Equal, unclassed, tribeless, and nationless,**
> **Exempt from awe, worship, degree, the king**
> **Over himself, just, gentle, wise.**

This, as well as the last scene, shows Shelley's power of description in a mood of restraint and poise. The poetry here is on the whole hardly above the mediocre, but passages here and there brighten up and lift the level of artistic achievement much higher, for example, IV.iii. 49—61 and IV.iv. 190—204. One wishes that there had been less detail and elaboration, at least a rewording of the picture of the old system as a contrast to the new in these could have been avoided perhaps with advantage. The Owenite comment on the long passage they reprinted explains their literary ideals as well; it equates Shelley with Socialism:

Could the most sanguine votary of Socialism picture, with his imagination, a finer earthly paradise, than the one which Shelley makes the Spirit of the Hour describe? Is there any gap left unfilled by the poet, which the Socialist is called upon to supply? I were not. Where is the object expected to be realised by the Social system, that is not here anticipated? Is not the portrait drawn of men and women in the foregoing extract, what every Socialist is desirous of seeing embodied in human life, and knows can alone be realised in community?

The last article[1] on *Prometheus Unbound* appeared on 16 February 1859. It draws the reader's attention to "the following most exquisite verses, sung by Shadows passing by, descriptive of the changes which had taken place through the conquest of Jupiter, and the liberation of Prometheus". (Here are cited: IV. 9—38). They contain one of Shelley's most beautiful lyrics: "Here, oh here" which depicts the forms and shadows carrying the corpse of the "Father of many a cancelled year." After this are reproduced II. 69—158 and 159—178. These extracts comprise choruses of Hours and Spirits which are wrought in rapturous lyricism. The theme is, however, the same. Shelley has redone here scenes iii and iv of the last act in his own typical style. He has invested the theme with great charm and beauty. The time lag in the composition of this act has helped him artistically.

Then the Owenite review quotes 274—318, which in their opinion described the "geological changes which the earth has undergone." Like all thinkers and intellectuals of the age, and like Shelley himself, the Owenites were conscious of the role that scientific discoveries played in bringing about the Industrial Revolution. They were, like Shelley, of the opinion that they should be put to constructive purpose.

"We have, immediately following, the Earth's song of Gladness, especially of the glorious change, which the nature of man had undergone." With this comment are quoted II. 382—387 which describe the man of the old erroneous system undergoing a change and then becoming:

Man, one harmonious soul of many a soul,
Whose nature is its own divine control,
Where all things flow to all, as rivers to the sea;
Familiar acts are beautiful through love;
Labour and pain, and grief, in life's green grove
Sport like tame beasts, none know how gentle they could be!

After citing the above lines, the review quotes II. 412—424 They describe man's supremacy over the elements of nature: "All things confess his strength." He has now in his control stars and tempests. Even the lightning is his slave. The obvious meaning is that science will now be put to the service of man, who, reaping material benefits, will enjoy his leisure in cultural pursuits that will give him aesthetic

1. op.cit. No. 35.

satisfaction. Man's personality now becomes integrated—the material, the moral and the artistic demands, no longer clash, but harmonize into one grand purpose. That is why Heaven has yielded all its secrets now, and man commands the universe exactly in the way he ought to. After this the review adds: "with some further continuance of this lyrical jubilee, the poem concludes in the following magnificent manner" (Here are reproduced II. 554—577).

This is Demogorgon's speech. It (particularly II. 562—578) epitiomizes the ideal, the struggle for its achievement, and finally the joy of its realization. Man's strength lies in "Gentleness, Virtue, Wisdom and Endurance." The Owenites appreciated this. But they failed to note that under Plato's influence Shelley had come to hold the view that evil perhaps cannot be eradicated; it might resurge if human vigilance relaxes, as Demogorgon warns in this speech. It is possible that the cyclic theory of history might create once again reign of terror and evil. But if man lives up to the following ideal the earthly paradise will be his and always his:

> **To suffer woes which Hope thinks infinite;**
> **To forgive wrongs darker than death or night;**
> **To defy Power, which seems omnipotent;**
> **To love, and bear; to hope, till hope creates**
> **From its own wreck the thing it contemplates**
> **Neither to change, nor flatter, nor repent.**
> **This like thy glory, Titan is to be**
> **Good, great, and joyous, beautiful and free;**
> **This is alone Life, Joy, Empire and Victory.**

The Owenites summed up the matter by saying, "The struggles of Socialism with the old world is the war between Prometheus and Jupiter, and just in proportion as we imitate the uncompromising Titan, both in firmness as well as love, shall we extinguish this evil system, and usher in the New Moral World."

It might be interesting to remark that the last cantos of *Queen Mab* also depict the "great Republic" where the artist has not yet learned his craft. The last two scenes of the third Act deal with the same theme, the artist has now, so to say, mastered his medium. But the fourth Act presenting the same ideal world is on a far higher artistic plane. It is the best of Shelley, like his best elsewhere in this as well as other poems. This is poetry of a high order. The Owenites rightly called it "the splendid poem."

Prometheus Unbound is the greatest poem in the Owenite view. No doubt, it is Shelley's highest achievement, here his art is at its best. He has employed varying stanza forms with more or less success and created rhythms that effectively serve his purpose. These verse-forms seem to be directly suggested by music and in that lies their strength or their weakness. His symbols have a

manifold significance, the philosophic, the scientific and the political, being fused in a way, which at once conveys emotional temper with sensuous joy. But this does not always happen. At quite a few places, the verse is on a mediocre plane. There is diffusiveness and vagueness since the poet has no happy conception of how best to convey that part of the experience. There are images and symbols heaped upon each other in the onrush of the musical sweep, which partly makes the lines obscure if not meaningless. There are perhaps no images in his poetry, at least in the modern sense; his metaphors and similes take on a symbolic significance without letting the concise core of the meaning assume a concrete form. But there are also quite a few places where even vagueness is an advantage, where the musical sweep is controlled and where the images acquire a plastic quality or where the thought is embodied. At such happy places, the passionate lyricism lifts the level very high—it is even great poetry. Taking the poem as a whole, I should put it among the major poems of the English language. It is difficult to agree with the Owenites, in view of the technical drawbacks as well as the speculative infirmities of the poem, that *Prometheus Unbound* is a great poem in the sense in which, for example, the word 'great' is applied to *Paradise Lost*.

The Owenite criticism, as we have seen, follows the political theme and symbolism of the play quite consistently. As in the case of *Queen Mab* and *The Revolt of Islam*, it illustrates various tenets and principles of Socialism, with their application to the contemporary political and socio-economic situation. In this framework, it is quite wide; it goes into the question of symbols and makes succinct references to the formal beauty of the poem. Shall we say that this criticism is sociological in its ideals and methods? No doubt it is sociological if we use the term in the sense that it was used for the sociological criticism of, say, Christopher Caudwell or Jackson's book on Dickens. It is very close to what is meant by Socialist Realism in Russia after the Communist Revolution. The Owenites everywhere in their writings demonstrate this sociological approach to literature. They also illustrated from *Prometheus Unbound* that Shelley was a prophet-poet; and brought home to their readers, the moral function and propaganda value of his poetry in these words: "The greater the number who can be brought to understand and appreciate the poetry of Shelley, the higher expectations may we entertain of human regeneration."

It might not be irrelevant to make a brief reference here to the critical opinion about Shelley, contemporary with that of the Owenites. I have already in Chapter I, discussed this briefly up to 1834. It would suffice here to refer to the opinion during the years 1834—1839. However, I am not taking into account the adverse critical opinion which still existed and in fact always has.

The Christian Teacher (1839) concluded the article entitled "On the Poetry of Keats and Shelley Part II with these remarks, "But the time will will come, when these peculiarities (defects that may be only in reference to the accidental genius of this particular age) will be lost sight of in the blaze of his now recognized glory, and he will be esteemed as one of the truest, and ranked as one of the very highest of poets."[1] *The Monthly Review of* March 1839 said in its review of "The Poetical Works of Percy Bysshe Shelley", published by Moxon, in 1839, "Shelley was unquestionably one of the greatest poets of modern times, and a genius of the most extraordinary character."[2] Keeping in view the reviews and articles published about these dates in journals like *Westminister Review* and *The Athenaeum* and following the spirit of the remarks quoted above, one can safely conclude that Shelley was now by almost a consensus of opinion taken as a major English poet.

In view of this critical opinion, as well as the modern appraisal of Shelley's poetry, it can be said that the Owenites exaggerated his importance as a poet. He is certainly a major poet, but not a great poet.

1. Vol. I. New Series, No. 5.
2. Vol. I. No. 3, March 1839.

CHAPTER 5

SHELLEY IN OWENITE PROPAGANDA

We have seen in previous chapters that the Owenites looked on Shelley as the greatest poet, who was in perfect accord with the Socialist System. He was their greatest authority, and his writings were of the greatest possible help to them. We also know that the Owenites, in their campaign to establish the new moral world, sought support from other writers, particularly the contemporary romantic poets. In order to understand the picture clearly, it may be well to see how they looked upon the rest of the romantics.

The Owenites held Wordsworth in high esteem for his democratic sympathies; he wrote about the common man. He had established in his poetry that every man is endowed with the sense of beauty, and that even the humblest creature is capable of appreciating the beauty of Nature. The industrial system had brought ugliness to man and closed his eyes to beauty. Man had lost his capacity for aesthetic experience, his responses had ceased to be natural. The spirit of the new movement that Wordsworth had started in poetry consisted in showing to the man of the town that the leech-gatherers and the idiot boys, living in direct contact with nature, found a true joy in life. It was exactly for this reason that he was held up to ridicule by such journals as the *The Edinburgh Review*, apart from the fact that they were judging him by eighteenth century standards. While reviewing *The Past, The Present, and The Future* by Robert Buchanan, the Owenites paid tribute to Wordsworth for his contribution to the common cause: "the musings of his own observant and catholic mind have been made to echo in grace and beauty and the power of gentleness over the length and breadth of the land, until they exercise an influence over our literature which is as great as it is unsuspected."[1] But Wordsworth had later become a conservative and ceased to support the radical cause. Shelley's *Peter Bell The Third* censured Wordsworth for his conservatism and dullness, and reminded the reader of the true function and ideal of a poet.

1. *The New Moral World*, Vol. VII. (New Series) No. 79, 25 April 1840.

The Owenites published an extract from Coleridge under the heading of "The Mhairs",[1] with an introductory note in which they called him "the sage and benevolent poet". Coleridge, while discussing the existence of evil in this world, praised Robert Owen for having almost eradicated it from New Lanark. He showed his agreement with Owen's basic tenet by referring to "the eternal truth that men and much more, children take their character from surrounding influences." But in another extract, entitled "S.T. Coleridge and Owen,[2]" published in the column of "Gleanings", Coleridge, though still acknowledging the value of Owen's system, differed from him on the matter of religion. He held that Owen, but for his views on religion, was eminently fitted for bringing about the much needed reformation of the British Society. "With these qualities, what might not such a man have effected, had he not wilfully stumbled over religion, which was not at all in his way, and thus impaired greatly his power of good." He went on to say that he had written a letter to Owen, imploring him "to avoid this rock; this vexed question of Fate and Freewill, of which less seems to be known, by those who argue upon it, than of any other subject of difference." Obviously Coleridge had failed to influence Owen; no two persons could be more different from each other than were they. Besides, in Owen's opinion, Coleridge had become a conservative, having turned his back on the radicalism of his youth.

We have already seen in Chapter I how Owen and Southey differed on the matter of religion. Besides, by accepting the poet-laureateship, Southey had practically identified himself with reaction, as against progressivism. His *Wat Tyler* was the trumpet call for revolution and received great notice and praise in the Owenite journals. It was advertised again and again and was strongly recommended for reading by young men. Southey might have retracted, but it was going to live as a gret piece of radicalism. The Owenites thought: "As long as radicalism flourishes, so long will this juvenile drama flourish also."[3]

The Free Enquirer[4] published a poem by Frances Wright, condemning the conservatism of Southey when he accepted the poet-laureateship. Once the "unfettered and enthusiastic republican", he had "consented to become the pensioner of those against whose oppression had once been levelled the artillery of his genius." The function of the poet was to be on the side of liberty, progress and

1. op.cit. Vol. III (New Series), No. 109 26 November 1836.
   [*Letters, conversations and Recollections* by S. T. Coleridge, Vol. I, pp. 167—168 (foot—note)].
2. *ibid.* Vol. II (Third Enlarged Series), No. 71, 29 February 1840
3. *ibid.* Vol. II. (New Series), No. 12 March 1836.
4. Vol. II, No. 16, 13 February 1830.

radical thought. He must stake his all for bringing about the new system. He must be fearless and should produce a strain that should rouse the land and fill it with "Promethean fire." "Southey had thus sunk low, by leaving Honour's side."

In an article, "The Sincerity of Early Aspirations for Good", the Owenites regretted that Wordsworth, Coleridge and Southey had deserted the radical cause. "Southey, Wordsworth, and Coleridge, were at an early period of life, by some other name, Socialists; and yet did all that youthful zeal fade away into conservative politics, and passive acquiscence in things as they are."[1] The Owenites argued that older men despise zeal for public good, not because they have greater wisdom or more experience, but because they compromise with the existing evil.

Wordsworth, Coleridge and Southey had become reactionary, but Byron in the Owenite opinion, had remained a revolutionary all his life. He was a great supporter of the fundamental principles of Owenism. The Owenites published a short note, entitled "Lord Byron A Supporter and Advocate of Our Fundamental Principles", saying that Byron was a necessarian and a revolutionary. They cited the following lines from *The Two Foscari* in support of their contention:

> **....Nothing rests**
> **Upon our will; the will itself no less**
> **Depends upon a straw than on a storm;**
> **And when we think we lead, we are most led.**[2]

Nevertheless, the Owenites did not find Byron's poetry to be in complete agreement with their system. His personal life was also not exemplary. They did not attack his morbidness or profligacy, since they must have regarded them as the products of the period of transition. It was his character, in the social sense, that they censured.

The Owenites published three long notes in *The New Moral World*, playing down the character of Byron. One of them was an excerpt[3] from George Henry Lewes's long review of Shelley's works published in the *Westminster Review* of April 1841. This almost amounts to a condemnation of Byron. His life and motives were not noble. He was bitter and cynical, whereas Shelley was generous and forgiving. He kept his feet firmly on the ground whereas Shelley soared into the ethereal regions. Shelley's life harmoniously blended the 'ethic' and the 'dialectic', but Byron's was one of dissipation born of his lack of faith in anything whatsoever.

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1. op.cit. Vol. II (Third Enlarged Series), No. II, 13 March 1841.
2. *The Crisis*, Vol. I. No. 26 1 September 1832.
3. Vol. 9, No. 21, 22 May 1841.

Last, but not least, was the animal diet; Shelley abstained for reasons, philosophic, Byron for not getting fat. Lewes also condemned Byron's poetry in the review and stated that he had long ceased reading it. But Shelley, in his view, was a great poet: "His was the true poet's spirit."

The above discussion explains why Shelley stood so high in the Owenite estimate as against Wordsworth, Coleridge, Southey and Byron. He alone among his contemporaries was their favourite poet, with whom they found themselves in perfect agreement. In their propaganda and polemical war, they were, no doubt, quoting from quite a few poets, particularly the Romantics, but it was Shelley who was quoted most of all. If statistics were to be taken, Byron who comes next to him, was quoted a little less than half of the number of times that Shelley was. This is obviously due not only to their complete intellectual agreement with him, but also to their emotional attachment to him. It is their love of him that makes them seek his support even when it is not needed. His authority is uppermost in their minds. If one were to count the total number of times that his authority was cited, it may not be very great, but it can be appreciated by a close and detailed examination of any one number of *The New Moral World.*

It was a large size sixteen-page closely printed weekly, dealing mostly with the political and social events of the week from the Owenite angle. Much space was devoted to a lecture delivered by Robert Owen or a writing by him, next to it came the reports of the Owenite societies, their meetings, and lectures delivered there by the missionaries. Equally important were controversial issues, for example, the long polemical war against the Bishop of Exeter and *The Quarterly Review* who had urged the government to take drastic action against Robert Owen and his disciples. Besides, it published selections from Romantic poetry and at times from English poetry in general; at times it also published prose-pieces as for example an extract from Shelley's "Essay on the Manners of the Ancient Greeks". Each weekly number devoted a column to literature, science and philosophy. The paper sometimes published a series of articles as for instance, on the poetry of Shelley, on the stage by John Barmby, or the woman question. Shelley is quoted mostly in the articles just referred to or in the review of current literature. Perhaps one could get a fair idea from this account of an Owenite weekly, how Shelley dominated their minds. It may also be mentioned that *The New Moral World* was later reduced to eight pages from sixteen. The Owenite journals also did not always have a separate literary column. Yet it may not be too much to say that looking at random into almost any number of this journal, one is likely to come across Shelley's name in one connection or another. Therefore it will be helpful in appreciating how far the Owenites were influenced by him to make an analysis of the mode and nature of the Shelley quotations. The

context in which these quotations appear will help us to understand how Shelley supplied the intellectual authority needed by the writer. It will then be best to subdivide this analysis under various headings.

1. Religion.

Shelley's furious attack on Christianity in *Queen Mab* was a source of inspiration for many Owenite poets as we shall see later. It was the most reliable stick to beat the old system with. The Owenites reviewed *The Course of Time, A Poem in Ten Books*, by Robert Pollock, saying,

> The above poem is simple in plot—its *Machinery* which is supernatural, is free from the gross heathenism of "Paradise Lost", rising perhaps about midway between this and the "Queen Mab" of Shelley. As a composition, we may observe in passing, it evinces genius, and a considerable power of thought and imagination.[1]

It is interesting to note the use of the word 'heathenism' in regard to *Paradise Lost*. And as against that, Pollock's poem rises towards the heights of *Queen Mab*. Its scheme, as described in the review, is after that of Shelley's poem and deals more or less with the same theme. Thus *Queen Mab* served as a guide and a source of inspiration.

A group of influential churchmen were carrying on a fierce struggle against the Owenites who considered it a great persecution and vilification. They said in reply that the leaders, Mr. Gutch and Dr. Redford, had no superiority in reading, but only in ridicule. The socialists, on the other hand, could not feel unkindly towards any since their mission was one of universal love. It was explained in a note entitled "Reply to Mr. Gutch", that they could not be a party to a system which had given to the people "workhouses, madhouses, treadmills, jails, barracks, and scaffolds".[2] The old system had on the one hand, bred paupers, vagabonds and criminals and on the other, policemen, jailers and hangmen. It had all along been responsible for intemperance, prostitution, hopeless poverty and unenlightened ignorace. Therefore the new system wanted to destroy the stranglehold of Christianity in order to create a religion of universal charity and love. It was at this place that the note brought in Shelley:

> When every transfer of earth's natural gifts
> Shall be a commerce of good words and works;
> When poverty and wealth, the thirst and fame,
> The fear of infamy, disease and woe,
> War, with its million horrors, and fierce hell,
> Shall live but in the memory of time,
> Who like a penitent libertine, shall start,
> Look back and shudder at his younger years.[3]

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1. *The New Moral World*, Vol. III. No. 129, 15 April 1837.
2. *ibid.* No. 199, 18 August 1838.
3. *Queen Mab*, V, 253—60.

2. The Law of Necessity.

'Concordia' illustrated the law of Necessity in an article entitled "For the Crisis", in the form of an allegorical story which opened with the following quotation from Shelley:

> **And the Naiad-like lily of the vale,**
> **Whom youth makes so fair and passion so pale,**
> **That the light of its tremulous bells is seen**
> **Through their pavilions of tender green;**
>
> **And the rose like a nymph to the bath addressed,**
> **Which unveil'd the depth of her glowing breast.**[1]

Mrs. A complained to her gardener that flowers had faded in spite of the best care she had bestowed on them. The gardener explaining that they were away from their native soil, took them—camellias, lilies and roses—to the countryside where they bloomed. It was the attention of an ignorant, fashionable mistress that had brought about their decay. Similarly with human beings: it is kindness, truth and congenial circumstances that develop moral character in them. Each individual is capable of receiving a superior character if the laws, institutions and customs under which he lives can be such as are in unison with the laws of nature.

John Barmby illustrated this law in a note entitled "Notes on the streets of Paris in 1840". He said that the London streets and the Parisian streets were two different things like the French and the English character. The human character, in his opinion:

> **is borrowed from the objects around it.... a dirty street would make a slovenly man or a fine *rue* a dressy one; on the contrary, some, however, say that the mind of man, as it is organized, is the former of these brick and mortar circumstances around it, and as light or darkness dwells within, it will look sumnily or cloudlily without. Of the latter opinion Shelley appears to be, when he sings of**
>
> **A lady, the wonder of her kind,**
> **Whose form was upborne by a lovely mind,**
> **Which dilating had moulded her mien and motion**
> **Like a sea-flower unfolded beneath the ocean."**[2]

'Minimus Fratrum' presented the case of the Sacred Socialists in an article of the same title.[3] He was trying to prove that the external circumstances alone do not form the character of man. He asserted that "the divine working must be of the deepest significance upon th formation of character, whether that working be acknowledged by the rational faculty or not." He also affirmed that the

1. *The Crisis* Vol. II, No. 26, 6 July 1833 (The Sensitive Plant Part I.)
2. *The New Moral World*, Vol. I. (Third Enlarged Series) No. 19, 7 November 1840 (The Sensitive Plant II).
3. *ibid*. Vol. II. (Third Enlarged Series) No. 5, 20 February 1841.

divine element does not acknowledge the sovereignty of the external, being itself, "the true Jesus, the son of God." But he felt it necessary to quote Shelley in his favour; it was important to lend his authority to the argument. Censuring him a little, 'Minimus Fratrum' accomodated Shelley to his own point of view in order to answer the criticism of the orthodox Owenite Socialism on its own ground: "A man may be an intensely inspired prophet, who, like Shelley proclaims his atheistic views; his inspiration resulting from divine governance, and his atheism from a perversion of reason."

3. The Woman

The article by 'Concordia', entitled "Woman", opens with a quotation from Shelley, used as an epigraph:

> **And women too; frank, beautiful, and kind**
> **As the free heaven which rains fresh light and dew**
> **On the wide earth, past; gentle radiant forms,**
> **From custom's evil, taint, exempt and pure;**
> **Speaking emotions once they feared to feel,**
> **And changed to all which once they dared not be,**
> **Yet being now, made earth like heaven.—PROMETHEUS.**[1]

She expressed her satisfaction with an admiration of the proposed arrangements in the new social system, according to which both the sexes would have equal education, rights, privileges, and personal liberty. Man had so far, kept woman in surveillance, merely as a plaything. He had tried to cultivate her emotions and imagination, forgetting how dangerous it is "when unaccompanied by correct judgment". She was a toy that could be picked up for amusement or thrown down when not needed. Injustice to woman was part of general injustice in the world. Not only man exploited man, but man as a class exploited woman. He had little realised that if woman were to be properly educated and allowed to cultivate, not only her emotions and imagination but also her mind, she could prove a most affectionate companion. Humanity had so far missed this joy; it was however gratifying to note that the new social system was making the dreams of the poets a reality. Thus the quotation at the head of the article was most appropriate since at this place in *Prometheus Unbound*, Shelley is depicting the ideal world which Prometheus had achieved. The woman will be free, uninhibited, wise, kind and an inspiration hitherto unknown to man.

In another article entitled "For the Crisis", "Concordia" presented the same argument in the form of a dream-story. It is

1. *The Crisis*, Vol. II, No. 20, 25 May 1833. [*Prometheus Unbound*, III, IV, 153—160 (The correct text reads comma after *too* in line 153 and not semi-colon; comma after *think* in line 157 and not dash; similarly in line 158 comma and not dash after *feel*; in line 160 semi-colon after *heaven* and not full stop).]

situated in an ill-fated land in which evil rules, where love is purchased and marriage is merely the pleasure of the man. She raised the question of woman in this land of tyranny and the result was that war ensued. It is much after the pattern of *The Revolt of Islam*, creating a vague atomosphere, with characters as vague as possible. "Once indeed, when men were boasting of their freedom, I believe I drew upon myself much ill-will by asking in public, in the words of a modern poet: "Can man be free when woman is a slave?"[1] She argued that women could not cross certain barriers and eat certain fruits whereas men could. Happily the time was arriving with the efforts of people like Owen and Shelley, when they could also enjoy equal freedom.

'Kate' followed up this campaign by another article entitled "Female Improvement", which opens with a quotation from Byron. She discussed woman's present condition, and the possible improvement in the future. In her words, she is deprived of the joy of life; her character is weakened; she cannot have "those delightful feelings which the consciousness of thinking and acting from one's self cannot fail to impart."[2] It was a plea for the recognition of her equality with man. "The mind in its qualities is the same, it differs only in degree!" Today it would be correct to say, in the light of the recent scientific researches that man and woman are equal in all senses. The days when an Otto Weininger could raise man's belief in the inferiority of woman to the level of philosophy are over; the psychologists, the sociologists and the anthropologists have established her equality with man. The only differences that are now admitted of are functional or to some extent temperamental, which are rooted in the different biology of the two. 'Kate', like 'Concordia' had emphasized that the interests of both the sexes are the same; as man and woman they together traverse the dreary wilderness of pain or walk among the roseate paths of pleasure. With equal laws and equal education for woman, man will gain in getting a better equipped companion. "In the elegant language of Shelley:

> **How sweet a scene will earth become!**
> **Of purest spirits a pure dwelling-place,**
> **Symphonious with the planetary spheres."[3]**

This was followed by another article by 'W.W.P., entitled "Woman as she is and as she ought to be". It opened with a long quotation from Shelley:

> **"Woman, as the bond slave, dwells**
> **Of man, a slave, and life is poisoned in its wells.**

1. op.cit. Vol. III No. II. 9 November 1833. (*The Revolt of Islam* III. xLiii. I).
2. *The New Moral World*, Vol. I. No. 33, June 1835.
3. *Queen Mab*, VI. 39—41 (The correct text has a comma after *spirits* in line 40, and a semi-colon after *spheres* in place of a fullstop in line 41).

Man seeks for gold in mines, that he may wear
A lasting chain for his own slavery;
In fear and restless care that he may live,
He toils for others, who must ever be
The joyless thralls of like captivity;
He murders, for his chiefs delight in ruin,
He builds the altar, that its idols fee
May be his very blood he is pursuing,
O, blind and willing wretch! his own obscene undoing.

Woman! she is his slave; she has become
A thing I weep to speak—the child of scorn,
The outcast of a desolated home,
Falsehood, and fear, and toil, like waves have worn
Channels upon her cheek, which smiles adorn
As calm decks the false oceans—well ye know
What woman is, for none of woman born
Can choose but drain the bitter dregs of woe,
Which ever from the oppressed to the oppressors flow.

This need not be; ye might arise, and will
That gold should lose its power, and thrones their glory;
That love, which none may bind, be free to fill .
The world like light; and evil faith, grown hoary
With crime, be quenched and die,—yon promontory
Even now eclipses the descending moon,—
Dungeons and palaces are transitory—
High temples fade like vapour, man alone
Remains, whose will has power when all beside is gone.

"Let all be free and equal"—*Shelley*[1]

This article repeats the arguments advanced by 'Concordia' and 'Kate'. In addition, more arguments, equally weighty, are put forward to make the case extremely strong. Happiness, virtue, freedeom and equality will remain mere concepts unless "a correct knowledge of the nature of men and women is given without exception, to the whole of community. Ignorance is the only original sin". Immediately here the writer asked in the words of Shelley: "Can man be free if woman is a slave?" He further argued that women who are to train children as useful members of society could not perform this most important function of their life while they remained ignorant and ill-informed or at best half-educated. "Women give the tone to a society, their influence is ever secretly at work for good or evil, their power is almost omnipotent, as it is omnipresent wherever mankind exist; they are, as mothers, the chief originators and moulders of characters." Thus the general level of civilization, culture and refinement is in commensuration with that of the women of that society. The second instalment of this article appeared after a fortnight, and continued the previous argument, exhibiting great hope for its practical realization:

1. op.cit. Vol. V. (New Series No. 12, 12 January 1839 (*The Revolt of Islam,* VIII. xiii. 8-xvii, I).

The community of united interests proposed by Robert Owen, promises to realize this blissful state of things, in which. . . .men and women in a state of rational freedom and equality, shall attain to a superiority in mind and body such as to surpass all that the poet or the sage ever dreamt or wrote of, where, in the language of Shelley.[1]

> **Our toil, from thought all glorious forms shall cull.**
> **To make this earth, our home, more beautiful;**
> **And science and her sister poesy,**
> **Shall clothe in light the fields and the cities of the free.[2]**

The same aspirations were voiced in an editorial entitled "Condition of Woman". In its second instalment, subtitled "Inferior, Political and Social Position: Causes of Mercenary Marriages", it advised people to follow the example of the Spartan women so that they could improve "the moral and mental character, of our first, most tender, and most powerful educators.[3]" The agrument continued as follows: "We shall then have commenced a regeneration of society in real earnest. . . .the contemplation of which prompted the exclamation from SHELLEY, one of the prophets and poets of the future":

> **'How sweet a scene will earth become!**
> **Of purest spirits, a pure dwelling place![4]**

It is Shelley's teachings, prophecies, and the glorious pictures of the future that are acting as a very strong influence on the minds of the Owenites.

The Owenites published a letter from a socialist entitled "The Condition of Woman" which repeated most of the arguments so for discussed. But it presented one or two new ones. It explained that the chief ambition of young women was a suitable marriage, failing which their life became meaningless and empty. Even if they succeeded in this object, it only resulted in a perpetuity of suffering caused by the father in the one case and the husband in the other. He paid tribute to the efforts of Mary Wollstonecraft, who "was certainly never surpassed in the sound sense and independence of mind, manifested in her celebrated "Vindication of the Rights of Woman", by any male writer.[5] Shelley, who was again quoted in this article, had been deeply influenced by this woman, whose daughter he later married. "Indeed woman, in the words of the divine Shelley—

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1. op.cit. Vol. V (New Series) No. 14, 26 January 1839.
2. *The Revolt of Islam* V. Song v (The correct text has no comma after *toil* in line 12; in lines 13 and 14 the words *earth*, *science* and *poesy* begin with capital letters; and line 15 has a sign of exclamation at the end; line 13, has a comma at the end and not semi-colon).
3. *ibid.* Vol. I (Third Enlarged Series) No. 8, 22 August 1840.
4. *Queen Mab*, VI. 39—40.
5. *ibid.* Vol. II (Third Enlarged Series) No. 14, 3 April 1841.

—As the bond slave, dwells—
Of man a salve; and life is poisoned in its wells".[1]

The sentence that follows is a paraphrase of Shelley's famous line, "Can man be free if woman is a slave?": "And as long as man continues to be a slave, so long will woman be his bond-slave; the oppressed ever seeking to become oppressors in their turn." Finally, as regards this question, John Barmby also gave his views in an article entitled "The Man-power, The Woman-power, and the Woman-Man-power." He, a Shelley enthusiast, also cited his authority:

"Obscener slaves with smoother brow,
And sneers on their strait lips, thin, blue and wide,
Said, that the rule of men was over now,
And hence, the subject world to woman's will must bow.[2]

This might be considered as going to the other extreme, but it would be more correct to take it as an extreme reaction to an existing evil.

The Owenites published an extract from Shelley's prose and entitled it "Love".[3] It balances what he had said about love in 'Notes, to *Queen Mab*.' The following quotation from the extract makes sexual love the most sacred relationship in the ideal world:

Man is in his wildest state a social animal—a certain degree of civilization and refinement ever produces the want of sympathies still more intimate and complete and the gratification of the senses is no longer all that is desired. It soon becomes a small part of that profound and complicated sentiment which we call love which is rather the universal thirst for a communion not merely of the senses, but of our whole nature, intellectual, imaginative, and sensitive, and which, when individualized becomes an imperious necessity, only to be satisfied by the complete, or partial or supposed fulfillment of its claims.[4]

No doubt, this is the position taken by both Shelley and Owen. And this was what they imagined would be practicable in the ideal society that they outlined. It is a moral position, but it must be observed at the same time that it was a new morality. It was opposed to the old one which had of course become meaningless, leading to mere hypocrisy and split of personality. This very passage was reprinted in another number. 'J.E.' in a letter to the editor of the *New Moral World* enclosed the extract, for publication, praising it in these words: "I met with the following gem, so exactly and exquisitely in harmony with the philosophy of socialism"[5].

1. *The Revolt of Islam* (VIII, xiii, 8—9).
2. op.cit. Vol. II (Third Enlarged Series) No. 18, 1 May, 1841 (*The Revolt of Islam*, Ix.xvi, 6—9).
3. *ibid.* Vol. IV. No. 188, 2 June 1838.
4. Medwin, *The Shelley Papers*, 1833, "Love", pp. 156—157. (The first sentence is not correctly quoted; it should read: "and the gratification of the senses is no longer all that is sought in sexual connection")
5. *ibid.* Vol. III (Third Enlarged Series), No. 13, 25 September 1841.

4. The Freedom of Press.

The Owenite journals were carrying on a long polemical war against the law of libel, believing as they did in man's unlimited freedom of thought and expression. If they wanted to create the new moral world, they had to remove this barrier in their way. In their article, "More Convictions for Blasphemy",[1] they threw their weight on the side of the persecuted. Before Moxon's conviction for restoring the objectionable parts of *Queen Mab* in his collected edition of Shelley's works, only the poor radical publishers had been prosecuted. It was good that the respectable publishers were now to be taken to task. They had been committing the same offence with impunity. They suggested that other respectable publishers like Murray, Longman and Bohn should also be charged on similar grounds. In this way, every publisher will be tried for blasphemy which can be discovered in every great author's works as Sergeant Talfourd had pointed out in his defence of Moxon. Otherwise the influential publishers will have to get the law scrapped. The poor radical publishers will thus be helped by their rich counterparts. In the article under discussion they wanted to present the poem to their readers for which the publisher had been convicted. Here they cited the following:

> **They have three words; well tyrants know their use;**
> **We'll pay them for the loan, with usury,**
> **Torn from a bleeding world—God, Hell and Heaven.**
> **Avengeful pitiless, and almighty fiend,**
> **Whose mercy is a nickname for the rage**
> **Of tameless tigers, hungering for blood;**
> **Hell, a red gulf of everlasting fire,**
> **Where poisonous and undying worms prolong**
> **Eternal misery to these hapless slaves**
> **Whose life has been a penance for its crimes;**
> **And Heaven a meed for those who dare believe**
> **Their human nature, quake, believe and cringe,**
> **Before the mockeries of earthly power.**[2]

The Owenites regretted that the work from which the above lines were quoted had been proscribed. Its study meant fine and imprisonment for the reader. This was the work of a man: "whose genius made him an ornament, and whose name is felt to be an honour to our country. Whenever lofty thoughts, pure minds, and philanthropic deeds are revered, the name of Shelley is held in reverence."

5. Literary Theory.

John Barmby in "An Essay towards Philanthropic Philology, Or Ideas on language, in reference to The Future, Of Transition and

1. op. cit. No. 3, 17 July 1841.
2. *Queen Mab* (IV 208—220).

Community", discussed the nature and function of language in the future. He said, "Shelley thus splendidly defines language:[1]

> **"Language is a perpetual orphic song**
> **Which rules with daedal harmony the throng**
> **Of thoughts and shapes which else senseless and shapeless were.[2]**

Advising that we must keep this definition in view, the only deduction he made from it was, that the language, to play the role that Shelley ascribed to it, will have to be plain. He went on to say that in that case we might have to "yield up the glory and loveliness of the poesie of Shelley, all the classic beauty and delicate music of Keats, all the fiery and melancholic grandeur of Byron, all the glowing and lovely fierceness of Elliott, all the quite quakerness—charms of Wordsworth". Though "A Phalansterian", in his letter, "Reply to Mr. Barmby's Letter on what is Called Fourierism", was criticizing Mr. Barmby for his censure of "The Young Socialist's Letter" (who had supported Fourierism) he was actually agreeing with him in principle at least. Barmby had said that the young socialist's letter was "without logic, arrangement or grammar"[3]. The 'Phalansterian' had written to say that no human production was perfect and so no one could lay claim to that. To meet the Owenites on their own ground, he brought in Shelley: "Shelley himself, whom both Mr. Barmby and the Young Socialist admire so much warmly, displays striking instances of a want of all the three"[4]. The 'Phalansterian' thought that if language could effectively communicate the ideas of the writer, the linguistic lapses did not matter. This is also what Mr. Barmby aimed at when he interpreted Shelley's view of language given above.

'W.W. Pratt' writing in his essay, "Of the Necessity and Pleasures of Agricultural Employment"[5] maintained that the finest minds—Shakespeare, Byron, Shelley, Elliott and Burns—had been inspired by the beauty of Nature. Therefore he urged that they must begin at once by acquiring land and making proper educational arrangements for the improvement and amelioration of man. If the circumstances surrounding man are of a superior kind, he hoped that we may soon be able to say, in the language of Shelley—

> **The time is come, when**
> **Man's toil from thought all glorious forms shall cull**
> **To make this earth, his home more beautiful;**
> **And science, and her sister poesy,**
> **Shall clothe in light the fields and cities of the free.[6]**

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1. op.cit No. 14, 3 April 1841.
2. *Prometheus Unbound*, (IV 415—417).
3. *ibid.* No. 10, 6 March 1841.
4. *ibid.* No. 18, 1 May, 1841.
5. *ibid.* No. 190, 16 June, 1838.
6. *The Revolt of Islam* V. Song 5, ("The time is come, when" is 'Pratt's' own addition).

In a review, in "Philosophical Series No. III" entitled "Remarks upon, and specimen of, A New Book of Genesis, as illustrative of Saint Simonian Cosmogony", John Barmby said: this work although undoubtedly fine as a work of art aiming at exciting religious enthusiasm, vacillated between "the tones of Isaiah and the notes of the Homeric Rhapsodists". Barmby further remarked that many passages in *A New Book of Genesis*, particularly the discourses between the Earth and God reminded him strongly of the "splendid" choruses in the last act of Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound*. He made a specific reference to "the following notes of the planetary music of the Moon and Earth, which are, besides, *apropos* for cosmogony".[1] Here he cited IV. 319—337 and 356—369 from *Prometheus Unbound*. At the end of this review, Barmby also made the following observation in a foot-note:

> **The analogy of the birth, growth, and death of human life with stellar existence, is one of the many ideas that Fourierism has stolen *sub rosa* from the *Doctrine St. Simonienne*, and the writer of the above articles learnt it from the *savans* of *Le Globe*, from Percy Bysshe Shelley, and other writers long enough before he ever heard of a Fourerite.**

Fourierism in the above article is accused of plagiarism and Shelley is used to prove the argument. Shelley is also equated here with Isaiah and Homer; his influence is as great and valuable as theirs. He is as a modern prophet as great as Robert Owen or St. Simon from whom Fourier borrowed the basic ideas of his system.

6. The New Moral World.

All Owenite propaganda, whether on behalf of women or the freedom of press, was aimed at creating an ideal state which they called the new moral world. Shelley's contribution to the cause was very great. In an article entitled "Speak Out Sir", subtitled "Teacher in old Society",[2] it was explained that the rapid speed at which society was moving towards the achievement of the ideal state was set by the efforts of Paine, Palmer, Voltaire, Volney, Mirabeau, D'Holbach, Shelley, and Owen, etc. Their influence was tremendous and the cheap editions of their works were educating thousands of people. In the same number, in another article entitled "Church Socialism by the Quarterly Review", while defending the measures suggested by Carlyle for the amelioration of society, the writer quoted Shelley to put the Tories to shame by saying that "One of our poets speaks of the power to 'discern the soul of goodness in things evil;' but the *Quarterly* and the parsons possess the contrary faculty". The line is from *Julian and Maddalo* and the correct reading is "Which seeks a soul of goodness in things ill"[3].

1. op.cit. Vol I (Third Enlarged Series) No. 26, 26 December 1840.
2. *ibid.* Vol. I (Third Enlarged Series) No. 15, 10 October 1840.
3. I.204.

In another article entitled "Socialism in France", subtitled "Charles Fourier," by 'Amo', the death of this prophet of socialism in France was lamented and the writer conveyed his feelings by quoting from Shelley:

> **To that high Capital, where kingly Death**
> **Keeps his pale court in beauty and decay**
> **He came and bought, with price of purest breath,**
> **A grave among the eternal.**
>
> **. . . . and till the Future dares**
> **Forget the past, his fate and fame shall be**
> **An echo and a light unto *eternity*!**[1]

Fourier had passionately worked for the future of the world and had inspired the masses. Under his influence they were beginning to question the existence of the abuses in society, so that many undesirable things were rapidly passing away. Here Shelley was again quoted: "The inspired Shelley has beautifully portrayed this change in his Revolt of Islam:

> **I have collected language to unfold**
> **Truth to my countrymen; from shore to shore**
> **Doctrines of human power my words have told;**
> **They have been heard, and men aspire to more**
> **Than they have ever gained or lost of yore.**
>
> **In secret chambers, parents read and weep**
> **My writings to their babes, no longer blind;**
> **And young men gather when their tyrant's sleep,**
> **And vows of faith each to the other bind;**
> **And marriageable maidens, who have pined,**
> **With love till life seemed melting through their look,**
> **A warmer zeal, a nobler hope now find;**
> **And every bosom thus is rapt and shook,**
> **Like autumn's myriad leaves in one swollen mountain brook.**
> **Canto IV., 13th stanza, Revolt of Islam."**

The writer then urged everybody to do his share for the glorious change according to his capacity; "every one should bear a part; and then might we reasonably look for the advent of that peaceful and happy period when in the words of Shelley:

> **Kind thoughts, and mighty hopes, and gentle deeds,**
> **Abound, for fearless love, and the pure law**
> **Of mild equality and peace, succeeds**
> **To faiths which long have held the world in awe,**
> **Bloody and false, and cold."**[2]

John Barmby's article entitled. "Inferiority of Fourier's Classification of Society", also opened with a quotation from Shelley:

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1. op. cit. Vol. VI (New Series), No. 49, 28 September 1839 (*Adonais* VII. 1—4 and 1.7—9).
2. *The Revolt of Islam* (IV xv. 1—5).

Eldest of things, divine Equality!
Wisdom and Love are but the slaves of thee,
The angels of thy Sway, who pour around thee
Treasures from all the cells of human thought,
And from the stars, and from the ocean brought,
And the last living heart whose beatings bound thee;
The powerful and the wise had sought
Thy coming, thou in light descending
O'er the wide land which is thine own,
Like the Spring whose breath is blending
All blasts of fragrance into one,
Comest upon the paths of men!
Earth bears her general bosom to thy ken,
And all her children should in glory meet
To feed upon thy smiles, and clasp thy sacred feet.
SHELLEY'S ***Revolt of Islam.***[1]

Basing his argument on this quotation, Barmby argued that there was little difference between the distribution of wealth according to Fourier's new classification of society and the existing order. Although Fourier maintained that the labourer in the phalanstree could become a savant or a capitalist, it would but work out in actual practice as a perpetuity of the old unjust system. And this system contains inharmonious elements which results in its being a disorganized society, "while to melodize society is the object of the Social Orpheus." Here the argument was supported by a quotation from Shelley:

Are we not formed, as notes of music are,
For one another, though dissimilar;
Such difference without discord, as can make
Those sweetest sounds, in which all spirits shake
As trembling leaves in the continuous air?[2]

The Owenites imagined the ideal world as a harmonious grouping of people, like the rhythmic organization of the planets in their perpetual motion in the universe.

In an article entitled "On the Phalansterian Theory", "A Young Socialist" answered Barmby's criticism of Fourierism by saying that Fourier's system was practicable. At the end of this letter he said.

Let us now listen to the gladdening words of Fourier, and while revelling in the fair realms of radiance and joy he has created, let us not exclaim that the scenes he depicts are too bright and beautiful ever to be realized but rather, in the words of the matchless, Shelley, let us learn.[3]

. . . . to hope till hope creates
From its own wreck the thing it contemplates.[4]

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1. op.cit. Vol. I (Third Enlarged Series) No. 23, 5 December 1840 (V Song. iii).
2. *Epipsychidion* (142—146).
3. *ibid.* Vol. II (Third Enlarged Series), No. 7, 13 February 1841.
4. *Prometheus Unbound* (IV. 573—4).

John Barmby, answered this letter of "A Young Socialist" by his own entitled "On what is called Fourierism", in which, apart from questioning him on certain other points, he showed his annoyance with him on Shelley in these words: "The incongruity and self-contradiction of the "Young Socialist's" letter, is very pitiable. For instance, he calls Homer and Shakespeare the two greatest geniuses world ever saw, and then speaks of the matchless Shelley! We are certain that he knows nothing of Communism."[1] The quotation in which the poor "Young Socialist" called Shelley matchless is given above. It was at another place in his letter that he said that adverse circumstances had produced writers of great genius and he named Homer and Shakespeare "the two greatest geniuses that the world ever saw." Barmby was either merely quibbling or protesting on his not bracketing Shelley with Homer and Shakespeare. I should think that it provided him with an excuse to do both at the same time.

In another article entitled "The Doctrines of St. Simon", 'C.S.' paid tribute to this doctrine. But he did say that St. Simon's clever attempt at deceiving the king of France into accepting his system which would ultimately bring about his own ruin, was not facing the issue boldly. Kings have to be thrown out by popular support. Here he cited Shelley's authority:

> **Nature rejects the monarch, not the man;**
> **The subject, not the citizen:**[2]

Therefore the Owenites urged the complete adoption of the Owenite system. "There is no remedy for this irrational and fearful state of things but an entire abandonment of the principles upon which society as a whole is based, and their substitution by others in accordance with nature and truth."[3] It was thus an invitation to action, that was given by the writer of the article entitled "The Crisis—Modern Feudalism—Duty of Socialists". He chose to arouse people in the words of Shelley:

> **. . . . But the poor man,**
> **Whose life is misery, and fear, and care;**
> **Whom the morn wakens but to fruitless toil;**
> **Who ever hears his famished offspring's scream,**
> **Whom their pale mother's uncomplaining gaze**
> **For ever meets, and the proud rich man's eye**
> **Flashing command, and the heart-breaking scene**
> **Of thousands like himself;— He little heeds**
> **The rhetoric of tyranny; his hate**
> **Is quenchless as his wrongs; he laughs to scorn**

1. op.cit. No. 10. 6 March 1841.
2. *ibid.* (Third Enlarged Series) Vol. I, No. 20, 14 November 1840, (Queen Mab, III, 170—171).
3. *ibid.* Vol. IV (Third Series), No. 11, 10 September 1842.

The vain and bitter mockery of words,
Feeling the horror of tyrant's deeds,
And unrestrained but by the arm of power,
That knows and dreads his enmity.[1]

The Owenites in an editorial, entitled "Partial Remedies" urged the need of immediate adoption of the Owenite system as that was the only complete, rational remedy. Nothing short of it could put the society on a better footing. The editor summed up his argument by quoting Shelley:

Toil from thought all glorious forms shall culll
To make this earth, our home, more beautiful:
And Science, and her sister Poesy,
Shall clothe in light, the fields and the cities of the free![2]

The New Moral World reprinted an article from *The Zoist*, (No. 5 April, 1844) entitled "Education as it is, and as it ought to be", in the column of "Literary Notice". The writer of this article put forward in most forceful terms that people had suffered too long and he asked how far was the thinking part of the society going to tolerate this inhuman injustice. People had been treated worse than despicable worms, but the limit had already been reached. "Let then the cries of the injured and oppressed rouse us to exertion".[3] Then the writer quoted to add greater force to this already indignant voice from Shelley:

Yes! crime and misery are in yonder earth,
Falsehood, mistake, and lust;
But the eternal world
Contains at once the evil and the cure.
Some eminent in virtue shall start up,
Even in perversest times:
The truths of their pure lips, that never die,
Shall bind the scorpion falsehood with a wreath
Of ever-living flame
Until the monster sting itself to death.[4]

In another editorial, entitled "Progress of Social Reform in America," the editor stated that the American society was taking steps to realize Owen's dreams. This was due to his untiring efforts, his devotion to the cause and the soundness of the system that he advocated. "Through their instrumentality the moral and mental worlds will be brought to accord with the beautiful harmony which pervades all that man has not deranged by his ignorance."[5] Then he supported his argument by quoting Shelley:

How sweet a scene will earth become,
Of purest spirits a pure dwelling place.[6]

1. *Queen Mab* (v. 113—126).
2. op.cit. Vol. V. (Third Series), No. 27, 30 December 1845.
3. *ibid.* No. 43, 20 April 1844.
4. *Queen Mab* (VI. 29—38).
5. *ibid.* Vol. VI (Third Series), No. 44, 26 April 1845.
6. *Queen Mab* (VI. 39—40).

Similarly 'Paper Money' opened his letter with a quotation from Shelley:

> **Commerce has set the mark of selfishness,**
> **The signet of its all-enslaving power,**
> **Upon a shining ore, and called it gold,**
> **Before whose image bow the vulgar great,**
> **The vainly rich, the miserable proud,**
> **The mob of peasants, nobles, priests, and kings,**
> **And with blind feelings, reverence the power**
> **That grinds them to the dust of misery.**
> **But in the temple of their hireling hearts,**
> **Gold is a living God, and rules in scorn**
> **All earthly things but virtue—Shelley.**[1]

He was discussing how evil could be conquered in this world. He explained that it could be done only by introducing "a rational paper money" such as he had been advocating through the columns of *The New Moral World.* The island of Guernsey which had introduced this new economic measure, was a concerete example before 'Paper Money' of the moral world that the Owenites were trying to bring about. "Had Shelley gone to Guernsey, he would not have been able to have found a single pauper."[2]

Barmby talked in glorious terms of the ideal world in his article entitled "Societarian Views on the Medical and Surgical Professions—Chapter 2".[3] He stressed the social role of the physicians and surgeons who had so far been exploiting the very disease of the people; they could in fact eradicate disease if they liked. It would however be possible in the new moral world because there, socialist doctors would "change our earth from a vast lazar-house of human beings.....into an open country, full of health and pleasure, blooming with robust youth, and crowned with healthy old age,—in which life would be gladness, and death a painless, quiet sleep;—of which we could say with Shelley".[4]

> **Mild was the slow necessity of death:**
> **The tranquil Spirit failed beneath its grasp.**
> **Without a groan, almost without a fear,**
> **Calm as a voyager to some distant land,**
> **And full of wonder, full of hope as he,**
> **The deadly germs of langour and disease**
> **Died in the human frame; and Purity**
> **Blest with all gifts her earthly worshippers.**
> **How vigorous, then, the athletic form of age!**
> **How clear its open and unwrinkled brow!**
> **Where neither avarice, cunning, pride, nor care,**
> **Had stamped the seal of grey deformity**
> **On all the mingling lineaments of time.**

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1. *Queen Mab* (V. 53—63).
2. op.cit. No. 22, 23 November 1844.
3. *ibid.* Vol. II. (Third Enlarged Series) No. 13, 27 March 1841.
4. *ibid.* Vol. II (Third Enlarged Series), No. 13, 27 March 1841.

How lovely the intrepid front of youth!
Which meek-eyed courage decked with freshest grace;
Courage of soul, ***that dreaded not a name.***
And elevated will, that journeyed on
Through life's phantasmal scene in fearlessness
With virtue, love, and pleasure, hand in hand.[1]

Finally, welcoming *Torrington Hall* by 'J. How' as "one of the most remarkable works that have made their appearance since the days of DEFOE",[2] *The New Moral World* called its author "one of the most eloquent, enlightened, and graphic of writers to our ranks; and to rejoice in the thought that this is but another of the many indications that multiply around us that we have not laboured in vain". The reviewer went on to say that society had by now become impregnated with the socialist ideas that would ultimately bring about the regeneration of the world. People were coming forward and contributing towards the realization of the new moral world. Then the final note of hope was struck by quoting Shelley for the last time in the journal, since it ceased publication after 8 November, 1845. The reviewer said that in future new social organizations will no doubt be evolved, "which based upon a better knowledge of human nature, and a true perception of the mission of Science and Machinery, will realize the prophecy of Shelley—that glorious poet of the future":

Our toil from thought all glorious forms shall cull,
To make this Earth, our home, more beautiful;
And Science, and her sister Poesy,
Shall clothe in light the fields and the cities of the free!

These lines and such others that were repeatedly quoted by the Owenite journals, epitomize the Owenite ideal of putting man's knowledge of Science to practical use, so that the dreams of the poets and thinkers could come true. It was only by such a pooling of resources that the new moral world could be brought about. The Owenites felt at this stage that they had sown the seeds of the peaceful revolution in the hearts of the people and that already they were blossoming forth, and before long what had so far been impossible to achieve, would become every day reality.

To sum up, the following main points emerge from the above discussion:—

1. The Owenites had completely identified themselves with Shelley not only intellectually, but also emotionally; they loved, adored and idolized him as a poet, thinker and man.

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1. *Queen Mab* (IX. 57—75).
2. op.cit. Vol. VI (Third Series), No. 56, 19 July 1845.

2. He was the greatest poet and thinker that the world had produced. It was he who had manifested, at least vaguely, the principles of the socialist system. Robert Owen had given them a concrete formulation.

3. Shelley was "one of the prophets and poets of the future" and "that glorious poet of the future". He was "the glorious Shelley", "the matchless Shelley", "the inspired Shelley", "the divine Shelley", "an honours to our country",—"the Social Orpheus"—thus "the name of Shelley is held in reverence".

4. Some of his lines became regular Owenite slogans, as for example:

Our toil from thought all glorious forms shall cull,
To make this Earth, our home, more beautiful;
And Science, and her sister Poesy,
Shall clothe in light the fields and the cities of the free!

CHAPTER 6

THE OWENITE POETRY

Queen Mab served as a model and guide for the Owenite poets. Technically speaking, it was an easier model to follow than *The Revolt of Islam* and *Premetheus Unbound.* It has no elaborate plot and intricate symbolism which make the other two poems difficult to understand. Each canto of the poem deals with a different problem, which is thus an individual poem in its own right. Above all, the poem presents the new theory of history, which was the central creed not only of the Owenite Socialism but also of Socialism in the larger sense.

The Owenite poetry also follows many short political poems of Shelley as models, in style and technique, as well as in attitude and contents. Some of these are the poems published with *Prometheus Unbound* in 1820. "An Ode" (on Spanish Liberty), for example, is an extremely revolutionary poem, inciting the reader to violence and direct action. Similarly the message of the "Ode to Liberty" ("Ode to the Assertors of Liberty", as it was called by Mrs. Shelley) is unmistakably clear and effective, although here Shelley soars high on the wings of his rapturous lyricism. Besides these, there are some other poems by Shelley that are directly political and could have served as models for the Owenites. "Tomorrow" (included in *Posthumous Poems*, 1824), for example, combines analysis with aspiration, whereas "Feelings of a Republican on the Fall of Bonaparte" (included in Galignani's edition, 1829) is direct, and even crude. To cite other examples, "Tower of Famine" (included in Galignani's edition, 1829), "Lines written during the Castlereagh Administration" (first published by Medwin in *The Athenaeum* of 8 December, 1832) and "Smiles For Two Political Characters of 1819" (first published in Mary Shelley's second edition of 1839) are marked by reckless Shelleyan passion and rebellious manner. The last of these three poems is also characterized by extreme mockery born of disgust and desperation. More or less the same could be said about "Songs to the Men of England", and "Sonnet, England in 1819", (first published by Mary Shelley in her first edition of 1839), and "Fragment: To the People of England"

and "National Anthem" (first published in Mary Shelley's second edition of 1839). From our point of view, the Owenite poets had before them as models not only *Queen Mab*, but also *Swellfoot The Tyrant* (1820), The Mask of Anarchy (1832) and *Peter Bell The Third* (included by Mrs. Shelley in her collected edition of 1839), and the short political poems discussed above, where Shelley himself is essentially a propaganda poet. Almost all these poems are marked by directness of purpose and method, with a view to achieving immediate effect.

The Owenite poetry discussed here was written and published in *The New Moral World*[1] during the years 1835—1845. It is analytical, realistic, and aspirational; it is revolutionary, rhetorical and even sentimental; it is at places defiant, and at places flippant towards sacred subjects. In diction it is nearly always realistic and concrete; there is an almost complete absence of symbolism. Even when it soars, it is never vague and indefinite. In fact, it could be said of all these pieces that they are written with a special purpose in view. It would be more correct to think of these poems as verses in which a knowledge of prosody, coupled with a deliberate propagandist intent, helps the Owenite writers to serve the cause. In spite of a passionate belief in the ideal and the utmost sincerity and devotion, they seldom reach the level of poetry. Most of these poems are fairly repetitive and are not much different from each other in matter or style. I have, however, made a wide selection for the sake of this discussion.

This selection also includes some of the poems which the Owenite periodicals reproduced from the contemporary journals, mainly because of their propaganda value. Most of these poems are by Robert Nicholl, Barry Cornwall, Thomas Hood and Ebenezer Elliott. A few of these reprinted pieces are thus no doubt even good poetry.

It will be well to discuss these poems under various sub-divisions:—

1. The Socialist Prophets.

It was natural, even inevitable, that the Owenites should have written panegyrics in praise of their prophets. Robert Buchanan, who is noted as a poet by the *Dictionary of National Biography*, paid his homage to Robert Owen in his poem, *The Past, The Present, and The Future*.[2] After discussing the past that had been turned into misery and crime by kingcraft and priestcraft, he joyfully talks of the arrival of the new apostle, who rose out of a sea of stormy waves, "long sought for and sigh'd for ". He presented to the world:

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1. All quotations in this chapter unless otherwise stated are from *The New Moral World*.
2. A. Heywood, Manchester, 1840, pp. 53—54.

The great conceptions of a mind profound,
Deep studied in the school of sage experience.

Robert Buchanan then discusses the boldness with which Robert Owen prophesied the fall of the old system and the advent of the glorious future. His greatest service was to attack the dogma of original sin and the concept of the freedom of will. Once human beings realized that they could change their own circumstances and that man is always a creation of the conditions that obtain in a society at a particular stage of its historical development, then the human beings could make their own destiny. Already many people had been influenced by Owen's teachings, and had become his disciples.

The pen of Godwin has not plied in vain,
Nor Bentham's brain profound, with giant force,
Labour'd for Human Right without effect;
Nor Owen's vast experience of mankind,
His won'drous zeal and charity, pass'd by,
Without due influence o'er the minds of man,
As Britain now can testify; which boasts
Thousands of converts to the growing cause
Of him from Lanark valley.

Similarly, John Garwood, at the end of his long poem entitled "The Force of Circumstances", pays tribute to Owen in the following words:

One master mind alone of his race,
Hath found the precious casket's hidden key,
And dared to show the treasure to his kind.[1]

To give one more example, John Critchley Prince whose *Hours with the Muses* came out in 1840, published a poem which opened with the eulogy of Robert Owen:

Hail! peaceful promise of a better age!
Breathing glad things in man's bewildered ear,
Rich with the precepts of that SOCIAL SAGE,
To whom the welfare of Mankind is dear.[2]

As the poet himself acknowledged, these verses were suggested by the reading of *The Revolt of Boes*, whose author remained anonymous. We know that it was written by Minter Morgan. It is an exposition of Owenism in the form of a fable; there are frequent quotations from Owen's writings.

The New Moral World also published quite a few hymns and poems, written mostly during the years 1840 1845—to celebrate the birthday of Robert Owen. The following may serve as a specimen:

1. Vol. IV. No. 199, 18 August 1838.
2. Vol. VI. (New Series), No. 58, 30 November 1839.

An Address

Delivered on the Anniversary of the Birth of

ROBERT OWEN.

(Written by Mr. Redburn)

THOUGH awakened reason *wisely* may declaim,
Against the Principle of *praise* and blame,
As fostering envy, pride, and *deadly* hate,
When ignorantly used to stimulate:
Creating rivalry, which plumes success,
While hate springs up from failure's deep distress,
Leaving its withering marks where'er we trace
Struggles for fame, wealth, honour, title, place:
Urging ambition's wild and reckless flight
O'er thousands sear'd beneath its burning blight,
Till war's red banner floats o'er fields of slain
That *one* or *two* some tinsel star may gain!
Marking with groans the track of those who ride
On labour's shoulders to high seats of pride,
Deaf to the cries of squalid half-fed toil,
So they but gain the *honours* and the spoil:
Still, where man's happiness has been the aim
Of *one*, who *courts* not praise, and *fears* not blame;
Who undeterr'd by slander's black array,
Has kept "the even teaor of his way",
Convinced, the good resulting, in the end
Will prove he is *of all his kind, the friend*:
'T is hard, we own, from praising to refrain:
'T is difficult for our feelings to restrain :
And yet we'll try: since *praise* would give him *pain*.
But, tho' we deem't unwise the man to laud,
The *principles* of truth we may applaud?
Those principles which he has sought to free
From the dark veil of shrouding mystery!
Which, known and practised, will be sure to bless,
And yield a harvest rich— of happiness!
This field is open: Truth will n'er grow *proud*:
Then give to truth our praises long and loud!
Already, where but partially put forth,
The *buds* of truth display the parent's worth:
The *Infant School* and the *Mechanic's Hall*:
Home Colonies; the *Poor Man's Festival*
(Mix'd as they are with Priestcraft's dull alloy
Which weakens even, where it can't destroy,)
Are portions borrowed from that *grand design*
Where one arrangement moved the *whole* combine!
For those who *sweepingly* our plans abuse,
Adopt by *bits*, and bring them into use!
We thank them e'en for that;— for ev'ry wave
That nears the haven, helps the crew to save!
Now come we to our most delightful part;
To stand, the organ of the Social heart;
To speak its one pulsation,—its Delight,
Once more to celebrate the natal night —
Of Robert Owen! and its joy to find

His many winters still have left behind
A healthy body and a rigorous mind:
Here's Robert Owen: may he live to see
At least one perfect full *Community*![1]

This poetic "address" avoids sentimental praise, it builds up the case for Robert Owen's greatness on logical grounds and reveals a rational approach to the subject of social reform. The poem achieves what it sets out to do: slowly and imperceptibly, it leads the reader to believe what wonderful personality Owen was, and then, naturally, he is overwhelmed by his own imaginative apprehension of the glory of this unique prophet.

As was expected, the Owenite poets sang Shelley's praises, with a feeling of pride and honour, since he was the source, even, of Owen's inspiration. John Critchley Prince, while bidding farewell to his favourite poets in his poem "A Farewell to Poesy", gave highest praise to Shelley:

Farewell to Shakespeare's mighty name—
Farewell to Milton's hallowed fame,
A Goldsmith's milder measures;
Farewell to Byron's thrilling powers,
Farewell to Moore's delicious flowers,
A Campbell's polished 'Pleasures'.

. . . .

Farewell young Keats, whose luscious lore
With beauty's sweet excess runs o'er,
And all that genius giveth:
Farewell to Shelley, with a sigh,
Whose strengthening fame can never die
While Truth or Freedom liveth.[2]

It is obvious that out of this group of poets which includes Shakespeare and Milton, it is Shelley who is the most distinguished and who will go down in history. Similarly, Robert Buchanan paid his homage to Shelley in his poem *The Past, The Present, and The Future*:

....the kind
Outpourings of benevolence have fallen,
Unheeded, unbelieved the poet's voice,
Tuned with the language of divinest love,
Bathed deep in radiant beams of richest thought:

Has sung the songs of peace and hope, and joy,
The coming day of equal destiny,
When selfishness should bid the world adieu,
And men have heard, and with a hollow laugh,
Mock'd the "enthusiast", and denounced his "dreams"
Because the mighty falsehood warped their souls,

. . . .[3]

1. Vol. V (Third Series), No. 49, 1 June 1844.
2. Vol. II (Third Enlarged Series), No. 15, 10 April 1841.
3. op.cit. pp. 50—51.

It is the same ideal poet Shelley who had died a martyr to the cause of the down-trodden. The world did not respect him but time had come when his voice was being heard by the right minded. It was an honour for them to follow his teachings ;they alone were the blessed.

Robert Buchanan again gave expression to the same views and attitude in a separate poem on Shelley. It is devotional, revealing a deep-rooted sentiment of love for Shelley, its emotional overtone even savours of worship. The poem is reproduced below:

ON SHELLEY

He's gone! the music of his voice is gone!
He who was wisdom's highly favour'd one!
In whom thought, feeling, fancy, all combined
To form the essence of a mighty mind;
A meteor of the air—a burning light—
'Midst the world's darkness, brief as it was bright:
A spirit purged from dross, and deeply fraught
With all the subtle elements of thought;
Whose vast expansive mind did boldly scan,
With eagle eye, the destiny of man
Who pass'd the breach that narrow souls confined,
And left the world a century behind.
Led on by truth, he scaled the dizzy height
Of proud Philosophy, and from the bright
And lovely things of Nature he did cull
The fairest flowers, to render beautiful
Those great imaginings of man's high fate
That fill'd his ever-acting brain. Elate
With splendid visions of the high behest
That waits the good and virtuous, his warm breast
Harbour'd no selfish feeling; he did live
Not for himself, but that man might receive
The richness of his wisdom. But no more
Will he illume the world! the blaze is o'er!
Yet, wide the seeds are spread, and taking root,
Which soon shall fill the world with choicest fruit;
And ages yet to come will fondly bless
His name — a boon denied in this.[1]

This is the highest tribute paid by any poet to Shelley. According to Buchanan, he is the greatest poet and thinker, who was ahead of his time by at least a century.

There are also two sonnets devoted to Mary Wollstonecraft, written by 'Stranger'.[2] Sonnet I describes her physical charm as depicted by her beautiful portrait; it is not possible for the poet to adequately appreciate her beauty. Sonnet II describes her intellectual charm which is still greater: she is the ideal woman, combining all the graces, physical as well as mental. She is called "Bride of the *world*"; the poem is devotional, creating a spiritual bond between the great woman and her disciple.

1. Vol. IV, No. 170, 27 January 1838.
2. Vol. VI (New Series), No. 41, 3 August 1839.

2. The Present.

The New Moral World reviewed *Herbert and Rosina*[1] by R.W. Thom., quoting some extracts from the poem. The review opened as follows:

> **An offering of one of the sons of labour, upon the alter of poetry, which though requiring the usual allowances for the circumstances under which it has been produced at the same time exhibits considerable vigour and skill in composition. To this is added an endeavour after concise and forcible expression, not unfrequently unsuccessful.**

One of the extracts given deals with the problem of labour and the labour theory of value. Wealth is the surplus value of labour and is denied to the real producers by the capitalists:

The other extract quoted is a variation on the same theme. It points out that the state is ruled by the weak who allow fools and knaves to carry on their war of rapine and greed. The situation spells ruin. The poet therefore makes a strong plea for reform:

> **And must it still be thus? Will mankind still**
> **Coolly submit while juggling priests combine.**
> **Laughing combine to give this reign of ill.**
> **Heaven's high sanction; studiously they twine**
> **The mystic text, until they prove 'tis meet**
> **That toil should starve, and idleness should eat.**

The poem obviously reminds us of *Queen Mab*. And so do the extracts quoted from *Wayside Flowers* by J.B. Walker, which was reviewed on 17 October 1840. They explain how commerce has blighted the life of the British people. Britain is carrying on highly profitable trade with the rest of the world, but her own people who produce the merchandise are starving. The capitalists are thus shamelessly exploiting the labour of the poor. The competitive system has poisoned the very core of life.

> **Land of the Briton! *inventions* flourish,**
> **Millions, obscurely born, ignobly perish:**
> **My heart dictates, I call three, land of slaves,**
> **Let others sing "Britannia rules the waves".**

Naturally in one of the poems, Malthus came under fire. We know how the radicals and Shelley had condemned his theory. Eben, who at other places in this journal signs himself as Eben Jones, I should think is Ebenezer Jones, whose *Studies of Sensation and Event* came out in 1843 and was reviewed in this journal by the Owenites. He worked for the radical publishers, Cleave and Hetherington, who were themselves zealous Shelleyites. He was an Owenite and later a Chartist. *The Dictionary of National*

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1. Vol. I (Third Enlarged Series), No. 13, 26 September 1840.

Biography remarks that under the influence of Shelley and Carlyle, he "developed the strenuous, but violently exaggerated style of thinking and writing which long characterized his productions". "His "Social Lyric" condemns the Malthusian doctrine:

> **When you find me a spot on this prodigal earth,**
> **That never was merry with life's sweet sound**
> **Or bring me one of her countless birth,**
> **Away from the bounty of nature found—**
> **I'll break at once my long loved reed,**
> **And own the stern Malthusian true,**
> **That man is decreed to pine and bleed;**
> **The many to perish to save the few.**[1]

Joseph Middleton in his "Stanzas" said the same thing though he was not consciously undertaking an indictment of the Malthusian dectrine, but expounding the labour theory of value:

> **Oh! earth would be a cheerful place,**
> **A realm for angels fit,**
> **Were't not for the unquiet race**
> **Who thickly tenant it**
>
> **For the Lord provideth well:**
> **For rich man and for poor,**
> **The fruitful hill, and verdant dell,**
> **Presents a bounteous store.**

'Septimus Unus's' poem "A Voice from the Moon, on Human Incongruities, Moral, Social, and Political", dealt with the same theme. The Owenite reviewer observed that "This is a lively and smart satire on the anomalies of human civilization", quoting a few stanzas. The following four lines would suffice for our purposes:

> **Before going he glanc'd at the wisdom we boast;**
> **But our wisdom, he thinks, smacks of foolishness most**
> **Our production's so great, — distribution so bad, —**
> **Tho' there's plenty on hand, it is not to be had:**[2]

The Owenites published "A London Lyric" by Barry Cornwall in *The New Moral World*[3] on 20 October, 1838 and also republished it in *The Moral World*[4] on 18 October, 1845. We know that Barry Cornwall (Bryan Waller Procter) was a great admirer of Shelley, though the latter was his severe critic. In this poem he describes how the rich young man exploits the poor youthful maiden. His desertion completely ruins her and she meets a death of shame and ignominy, whereas he is still indulging in his luxurious enjoyment. Worst of all, he is still respected, and respectable mothers with marriageable daughters on hand have their eye on him:

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1. Vol. V (New Series), No. I, 27 October 1838.
2. Vol. VI (Third Enlarged Series), No. 10, 6 March 1841.
3. Vol. IV. No. 208.
4. Vol. I No. 8, (There are a few changes in the punctuation of the poem as it appeared in this journal).

> **There! — yet his deeds are all trumpet-sounded —**
> **There, upon silken seats recline**
> **Maidens as fair as the summer morning,**
> **Watching him rise from the sparkling wine.**
> **Mothers all proffer their stainless daughters;**
> **Men of high honour salute him "friend";**
> **Skies! oh, where are your cleansing waters;**
> **World! oh, where do thy wonders end?**

The New Moral World also published Barry Cornwall's *The Poor House.* It draws a dreary picture of the poorhouse in which the orphans, both male and female, are treated in a most inhuman manner. They live at a sub-human level, untaught and untrained. They are, on the other hand, made to work day in and day out. It may be interesting to remark that the poorhouses were the great source of free child-labour for the master manufacturers. The last stanza of the poem makes an impassioned plea for reform, portending the revolution that looms large over the horizon:

> **O Wealth, come forth with an open hand!**
> **O Charity, speak with a softer sound!**
> **Yeild pity to Age — to tender Youth—**
> **To Love, wherever its home be found!**
> *But I cease,*— **for I hear, in the night to come,**
> **The cannon's blast, and the rebel drum**
> **Shaking the firm set English ground.**[1]

Equally depressing is the misery in the homes of the working poor. They have no time and mind to enjoy even the sunny season of May. "The Poor Man's May" published on 4 August, 1838 was taken from *Songs, Sonnets, and Miscellaneous Poems* by John and Mary Saunders—the volume had received commendation from Leigh Hunt and Bulwer Lytton. The poem is a pathetic lament over the most pitiable condition of the majority of the people:

> **Sweet May! they tell me thou art come:**
> **Thou art not come to** *me*;
> **I cannot spare a single hour,**
> **Sweet May! to welcome thee.**
> **God knows how hard I've worked this week**
> **To earn my children bread**
> **And see, we have an empty board,**
> **My children are unfed.**[2]

"A LETTER" from 'Geo Conrad' deals with the theme of debt. He had been imprisoned for debt, "but serving the cause has written a hymn as he calls it to give colour to his lecture". He finds a brotherhood of debtors in jail, they form a community of interest. Therefore he urges:

> **In ardour, then, let's strive to trace**
> **The source from whence such evils flow**

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1. Vol. VI (Third Series), No. 5, 27 July 1844.
2. Vol. IV. No. 197.

That all imprison'd in this place
Will more and more in friendship grow.[1]

The Owenites reprinted a poem by 'Sun' entitled "Rich and Poor: or All the Difference!" from *The Morning Herald* which exposed the perverted standards of justice in the country. The poor could be knocked down by the rich with impunity and any attempt to bring them for their offence before a court of law met with frustration. The last stanza is an impassioned appeal for Justice:

Oh, happy England: where Justice tender
As Pity's Self, to the rich offender
Is hard, as the bolt of prison—door
When the culprit is low—born, friendless, and poor.[2]

The poem entitled "Alexander the Great", subtitled "The Child's Inquiry" says that a man is great in commensuration with the greatness of his crime. Abdiel Young, who killed his neighbour, was put into jail and hanged, but Alexander the Great, who killed millions and razed hundreds of cities to ground, was a great man. This is a successful poem. Its quiet irony and simplicity of language are very engaging; its conversational style lends it a colour of real life and its directness of approach to the subject raises it to the literary level. Here is a specimen:

Well, then if I should kill a man,
I'd kill a hundred more
I *should be great*, and not get hung
Like Abdul Young before.[3]

The New Moral World reproduced "The Cry of the Children" from *The Illustrated Family Journal* in which it first appeared with an illustration. It is a most pathetic poem, drawing a picture of children who are undergoing extreme suffering and woe which never relaxes. They lean their young heads against their mother's breasts who are equally helpless and woe-stricken. All nature is smiling, the lambs are bleating and the fawns are playing in the fields, but the children are weeping. The older generation, no doubt, was blasted and they are utterly hopeless, they see no redemption. But why should the new generation be also ruined? They are wearied, their looks are sad and their faces are sunken. They are very weak and their young feet cannot carry them. It is all the time on their mind that they may die before their time. All the day, the wheels are droning and their metallic motion is cruel, it is grinding them to death. It is hard for them to understand why God is so unjust and why He does not relieve them of their misery. They go to visit the grave of little Alice who died a year back, knowing full well that

1. Vol. I (Third Enlarged Series), No. 7, 15 August 1840.
2. Vol. V. (New Series), No. 37, 6 July 1839.
3. Vol. V. (New Series) No. 9, 22 December 1838.

they will be following her fairly soon. The wretched children are seeking death in life. The wheels in the factories mock them and send them to despair and utter hopelessness. The following is the most pathetic stanza of all:

> **"True", say the young children, "It may happen**
> **That we die before our time**
> **Little Alice died last year—the grave is shapen**
> **Like a snowball in the rime (*Sic*)**
> **Turns the sky in the high window blank and reeling—**
> **Turns the long light that droppeth down the wall—**
> **Turns the black flies that crawl along the ceiling—**
> **All are turning, all the day, and we with all!—**
> **And, all day, the iron wheels are droning**
> **And sometimes; we could pray,**
> **'O ye wheels, (breaking out in a mad moaning),[1]**
> **'Stop! be silent for to-day!'**

Ebenezer Elliott, as we know, was a great admirer of Owen. His poem "Leaves and Men" depicts a woeful and most pitiable picture. The old leaf is a symbol for the dying old man who can no longer stand the buffets of misfortune. The cycle of life will continue: the spring will come with new buds and flowers, so will winter destroying all. Nature is exquisite: "death alone that's sad."

> **Race after race of leaves and men**
> **Bloom, wither, and are gone;**
> **As winds and waters rise and fall,**
> **So life and death roll on;**
> **And long as ocean heaves, Old Leaf,**
> **And bud and fade the leaves, Old Leaf,**
> **Will life and death roll on.[2]**

If this is life, if this dire poverty is interminable, if the best of efforts cannot win even bread to fill the belly of the children and stop them from crying, then life is utterly meaningless, dark and bleak. Such a man cannot think of any of the higher things of life—he cannot read or write poetry. In such circumstances, poetry is a luxury. This is an old question and John Critchley Prince raises it in his poem entitled "A Farewell to Poesy" from which I have already quoted.

3. The Law of Necessity:

John Garwood's poem entitled "The Force of Circumstances" appeared in four instalments. The first is introductory, explaining the amoral law of Necessiry.

> **Nor deem that lessons which are learn'd in youth,**
> **Will be forgotten in maturer years.**
> **From pebbles cast into a placid stream**
> **Though small at first the circling line revolves,**

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1. *The Moral World*, Vol. I, No. 1, 30 August 1845.
1. *The Moral World*, No. 2, 6 September 1845.

Yet each successive eddy wider grows
Till in the orbit of extending space
The distant motion vanishes from sight.[1]

Part two tells the story of a sixteen year old beggar girl and thus illustrates the law of Necessity. She is the ninth child of a poor mechanic, her parents having died. Though her mother, whose mental balance was disturbed by the wretched conditions of life had poisoned her at her very birth, she did not die. She is now sickly, without clothes, food or shelter. Her only friend in the world is a younger brother. He loved her with an unselfish heart. Deprived of any means, even employment, he took to stealing in order to support his sister. But soon the merciless hand of unjust law swooped down upon him and he was imprisoned. After his release his nature underwent a change as a result of the conditions in the jail in which he had been lodged. This process of hardening continued till he ended as a murderer.[2]

The Owenites published a long poem by 'B' entitled "Socialism", which carried the following epigraph from Shelley:

But hoary-headed selfishness has felt
Its death-blow, and is tottering to the grave:
A brighter morn awaits the human day,

When every transfer of earth's natural gifts
Shall be a commerce of good words and works;
When poverty and wealth, the thirst of fame,
The fear of infamy, disease and woe;
War with its million horrors, and fierce hell
Shall live but in the memory of time,
Who, like a penitent libertine, shall start,
Look back, and shudder at his younger years.[3]

It is an ambitious poem, dealing with various aspects of Socialism. The following lines clearly explain the law of Necessity:

For, by unseen necessity, each soul
Is moulded by the form of outward nature,
And circumstance and inward gifts produce
Newton, or Nero,—Luther, or Voltaire.
Thus man may be, by man, made good or evil,
For meanest causes frame the fated soul;
And even the food, which nourisheth the blood,
The differing ailment of man and man —
Their differing atmosphere and exercise
Shall mar, and make, and modify the soul,
The intellect, the passion, and the heart,
Even as the knowledge stored within the brain.[4]

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1. Vol. IV. No. 193, 7 July 1838.
2. Vol. IV. No. 194, 14 July 1838.
3. *Queen Mab.* VI. 249—259.
4. Vol. VII (New Series), No. 72, 7 March 1840.

"Thoughts on Necessity" is a somewhat confusing poem. Its first two stanzas paint man's helplessness in the historical scene of his destiny. He is like a leaf that floats over the surface of the water and is tossed by the waves hither and thither. Thus man is passive and has no freedom of will. Yet he was taught, quite wrongly, that he has freedom of will and was therefore held responsible for all his actions. In the last stanza, the poet, I think, successfully tries to accòmodate freedom of will with the law of Necessity. He is talking of the impressions on the mind of man, when he says:

> **They are a cause, his feelings an effect;**
> **And when the mind reacts, will is a cause,**
> **The will and motives which that act direct**
> **Are formed by the convictions which he draws**
> **From past impressions. He lives to protect**
> **His own existence, 'neath unbending laws**
> **Which he can by his faculties discern,**
> **Necessity is urging him to learn.**[1]

The editorial comment points out its partial failure in the exposition of the law of Necessity. It also takes it as a bad poem:

> **We insert this as a curiosity in the way of versification, although we think prose would have been a better vehicle for our correspondent's ideas. We must also take exception to the philosophy, in so far as it attributes to man, no greater *reactive power* on circumstances than to a leaf on the surface of a river. The analogy is true in some points but not in others.**

It is true that the above stanza presents a contrast to the earlier ones where man is shown to be utterly helpless. This contrast also tends to give a false impression about this stanza. The subsequent stanza further adds to the confusion.

4. Religion.

The poem entitled "The Question Answered; or, What is God?" by 'A.D.' is an exposition of Owen's point of view on religion:

> **You ask me, "WHAT IS GOD?" and I**
> **To this grave question thus reply;**
> **For I, though but a finite creature,**
> ***Know* what is God, and what is nature.**
> **Whatever mortal can feel,**
> **Or see, or hear, or taste, or smell;—**
> **Whate'er the memory can receive;**
> **Whate'er the reason can believe:**
> **All that the mind can understand,**
> **The power that knowledge can command;**
> **All o'er which fancy ever trod,**
> **Is nature, — *all the rest is God.***[2]

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1. Vol. I (Third Enlarged Series), No. 9, 29 August 1840.
2. Vol.II (Third Enlarged Series) No. 4,23 January 1841.

The Owenites copied Arthur Brooke's poem entitled "The Religion of Custom" from *the Kent Herald.* It stated the Owenite position *vis-a-vis* religion in the following lines:

> **Of that grander Religion, whose pillars are seen**
> **On the heart and the intellect, circling sublime**
> **The whole sphere of humanity — wherein are met**
> **All the wisest and best of each age and each clime[1]:—**

"Varieties of Truth" by 'R.W.W' brings out the differences among various sects of Christianity. The Quakers, the Unitarians, the Baptists, the Methodists, the Swedenborgians and the Predestinarians hold even contradictory views. It is only the Owenites who have a rational approach to the problem:

> **The Owenites do not believe**
> **That man's by nature bad,**
> **The opposite they all perceive,**
> **And in this *truth* are glad.[2]**

'Eben's' poem entitled "Faith" is a bitter attack on Christianity and its belief in original sin. Faith has been responsible for creating the instrument of inquisition that has covered the country with blood. It has shut its doors on the wise and the good, and instead the ignorant spread falsehood in its holy name. By propagating the doctrine of original sin, it has blighted the very sweetness of human life:

> **Thou hast been, and the bloom has forsaken the flower,**
> **Its meaning the landscape, its music the wind;**
> **And oh, thou dark demon, thy pitiless, power,**
> **Hath converted and conquered humanity's mind,**
> **Till it dooms on thine altar sweet freedom to death!**
> **Avaunt thee — Faith![3]**

The New Moral World reprinted a poem entitled "Lines on Often Hearing England Called 'A Christian Country'" by Stephen Fawcett from *Leeds Times.* It draws the picture of contemporary England, pointing out how in all walks of life Christians are acting against the teachings of Christ—the position that Shelley took later. He says that kings, lords, bishops, and bankers would certainly not exist if Christ's teachings were followed. Nor would there be exploitation, war and endless hatred if his message was not disregarded:

> **"A Christian country! "If 'tis, let us fling**
> **The gospel into the deep sea!**
> **For Christ then did surely from Beelzebub spring,**
> **If England *his* country can be.[4]**

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1. Vol VI. No. 51, 12 October 1839.
2. Vol. V (New Series), No. 20, 9 March 1839.
3. Vol. V (New Series), No. 5, 24 November 1838.
4. Vol. I (Third Enlarged Series), No. 19, 7 November 1840.

Richard Monckton Milnes, in December 1829, it might be interesting to recall, went with Hallam and Thomas Sunderland as a deputation from the Cambridge to Oxford Union Society to argue the superiority of Shelley as a poet to Byron. His poem entitled "The Poor Man's Church"[1] was published by the Owenites with an editorial comment saying, "Our National Church is emphatically called 'The Poor Man's Church', and its teachers profess a religion which inculcates the brotherhood of man, and yet its practice towards the poor is heartless in the extreme." The poem describes how a rich lady is received in a particular church on a Sunday, whereas a poor woman has to go back because "The few free-seats were crowded where she could rest and pray". This was an invidious discrimination practised by the "Protestant Christian Church of England". As against this the poor received equal treatment with the rich at the religions ceremonies of peoples holding other faiths like Roman Catholicism or Islam. The poem is a vehement appeal to end the disgusting class distinction in the house of God:

Who shall remove this evil
That desecrates our wage;
A scandal great as ever
Iconoclastic rage?
Who to this CHRISTIAN People
Restore their heritage

Some of the poems about religious questions, besides being belligerent in their tone, are also flippant. The tone of half-mockery in "An Answer" by 'H.H'., subtitled "on an atheist's grave", lends a trechant quality to the poem:

The bigot's curse, from the gothic pile,
On the sceptical *few* may fall;
But Nature extends, with a mother's smile,
Her pity and love to ALL.[2]

Similarly the following lines from "AN Episcopal Address on Socialism" taken from the *Morning Chronicle*:

He would not offend, but would fain be knowing
If Normandy was not as loose as Owen?
And would ask—nought meaning by the hint —
Did he believe in God ?—for Owen didn't.[3]

Pencil 'En'. wrote on "Blasphemy" in the similar vein : a fair lady asked him to define blasphemy and he explained that it was no problem at all. Only the lawyers and parsons mystified the matter. The actual truth was:

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1. Vol. IV. No. 182, 21 April 1838.
2. Vol. IV. No. 182, 21 April 1838.
3. Vol. VII (New Series) No. 73, 14 March 1840.

This may be orthodox to you,
Yet heterodox to me;
But *that* is Blasphemy to both,
With which, both disagree![1]

The New Moral World reprinted Thomas Hood's poem entitled "An Open Question", published in *The New Monthly Magazine* (August 1840). It is a humorous poem on a serious theme. It brings out the folly of the religious fanatics for having discarded the use of reason. The poem achieves the effect of the ridiculous by a clever use of words in a nonsensical manner. Similarly different ideas and concepts jostle together producing a sense of incongruity. The question posed is: why should gardens be closed on Sundays and why should people be deprived of innocent and at the same time badly needed recreation? The beasts can freely roam on a Sunday, but not man. Religion thus blasts the very innocence and legitimate happiness of man.

Spirit of *Kant*! have we not had enough
To make religion sad, and sour, and snubbish,
But saints zoological must cant their stuff,
As vessels cant their ballast—rattling rubbish!
Once let thy sect,—triumphant to their text,—

Shut Nero up from Saturday till Monday,
And sure as fate they will deny us next
To see the Dandelions on a Sunday—
But what is your opinion, Mrs. Grundy?[2]

The poem, "Faith, Hope, And Charity, An Allegory, (Inscribed to the Bench of Bishops)" looks at the Bishops facetiously:

Faith, Hope, and Charity, *once* met together
In the breast of a Bishop,—a wonder, folks said
They bow'd to each other, and talk'd of the weather
As that was a topic on which they agreed.[3]

Owenism, on the other hand, is a religion where their combination is a blessing to humanity. "Bishops" by 'H.R' is a serious indictment of the dichotomy in their faith and practice. In the good old days, the bishops regulated their lives in strict accordance with the teachings of Christianity, and served the poor and the helpless. But today they are leading false, hypocritical lives.

We know that the Owenites had to fight a long, polemical war with the Bishop of Exeter when he urged the British government to take drastic measures against Robert Owen and his followers. 'Pencil 'EM' wrote a poem entitled "Address of the Socialists to the Lord Bishop of Exeter" to which he appended the following introductory note:

1. Vol. I (Third Enlarged Series), No. 5, 1 August 1840.
2. Vol. I (Third Enlarged Series) No. 8, 22 August 1840.
3. Vol. VII (New Series) No. 75, 28 March 1840.

Certain of the clergy having addressed the Bishop of Exeter, and stated their admiration and approval of the late crusade against Socialism, the following address is submitted, as a rough draft of one from the social body as being, in some respects, due to his *veracious* and *charitable* Lordship, for the good he has done the cause of Rationalism.[1]

The manner is facetious and the tone is that of half-suppressed mockery. The Bishop's candid dealing has served the Owenite cause. His agitation has given wider publicity to their views than they could ever hope to gain by their efforts. He has done his best to set the witch-hunters against them by advocating the legislation of still more stringent laws and the use of force for suppressing the movement. Then follows advice to the Bishop to learn humility and charity:

We thank you for your kind intention;
Just allow us here to mention,
That "He in whom is thy redemption"
Was meek and lowly;
E'en Christ, by whose kind intervention
Philpotts is holy.

'Septimus Unus' wrote a poem entitled "The Attack on the Churches" when the storm of 3 January, 1841 set two of the churches on fire. It was an opportunity to cudgel the Bishop:

A CERTAIN Bishop, orthodox, devout,
(Alas! how weak in praise is my poor metre!)
Who *feeds* so well upon the *cross*, no doubt,
That he, in consequence, is called *Xeaters*,
A saint, who would support the crucifixion,
Or, indeed, any fiction of his craft—
By pains and penalties—Love's kind infliction
For raking stubborn sinners, for and aft![2]

A Dream Explained is another skit on the Bishop. The poet saw the devil at work in his dream. He also saw the Bishop instantly assuring the devil that he should not worry since he would do his job.

The other night in my dream I chanced to stop,
Where I saw the Devil at work in a shop;
And he had laid hold of a spiritual peer,
And was whispering laughingly into his ear.
I could not make out what the Evil One said,
But I saw that the Bishop was nodding his head;
And I heard him utter, in a courtly tone,
"Oh, leave it to me,—your work shall be done.[3]

In the morning, he saw in the newspapers the report of the Bishop's speech in which he had cavilled at the Owenites and urged the govern-

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1. Vol. VII (New Series), No. 80, 2 May 1840.
2. Vol. II (Third Enlarged Series), No. 4, 23 January 1841.
3. Vol. II (Third Enlarged Series), No. 13, 27 March 1841.

ment to take stringent measures against them. Henry Philpotts, the Bishop of Exeter, was thus the devil, the villain, was an epitome of the whole evil of the old immoral world and so he deserved all this thrashing.

The same number reproduced a piece from *The Morning Chronicle*, and entitled it "Narrow Escape of the Bishop of Exeter". He was attending a service in a chapel near Regent Street when he went to sleep and later fell out of his pew. He, however, did not receive any injury and next morning attended the meeting of the House of Lords. The paper advised the proprietors of this chapel that "they should provide more lively preachers, or stronger fastenings to their pew-doors, when the Bishop of Exeter honours their chapel by reposing in it during divine service".[1] Then follows the poem, a piece of mockery, taken from *The Weekly Chroncile*. Here is one of the Stanzas:

> **He seeks his pew, that holy man,**
> **Sworn foe to Satan and his clan;**
> **He seeks his pious pew, but oh,**
> **Just as the parson, grave and slow,**
> **Begins t' exhort the listening group,**
> **The Bishop' eyes begin to droop!**
> **By degrees strange music goes**
> **Forth from his anointed nose;**
> **Faint, at first, as woman's sigh,**
> **Sounds the dulcet melody,**
> **Tickling people's ravished ears,**
> **Like the music of the spheres,**
> **But in cadence swelling soon,**
> **Like a Drury-lane bassoon.**
> **The sound, at length, becomes a snore,**
> **Tremendous in its nasal roar,**
> **And warns the pastor's startled sheep,**
> **That Exeter is fast asleep!**

The New Moral World also published a sort of play entitled "Persecution and Philosophy" in three instalments[2] in which they showed the Bishop engrossed in the most sordid intrigue against the Socialists.

5. Love and Marriage.

The priests had blasted human happiness in other spheres of life also; they had poisoned even love and marriage. The poem entitled "The Missionary Bride", subtitled "A Poetical Epistle from a Young Lady to her Friend",[3] taken from "E.S.H"'s *Sketches from real*

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1. Vol. II. No. 14, 3 April 1841.
2. Vol.II (Third Enlarged Series), Nos. 10, 11 and 17.
3. Vol XXI. No. 24, 12 December 1840.
["E. S. H." stands for Elizabeth Still Pearsall, Countess of Harrington Whose poems came out in 1874, vide *Dictionary of Anonymous and Pseudonymous Authors* by Hailkett and Lainge].

(*Sic*) *Life*, describes in a facetious manner the fate of the bride of a missionary. She was blithe and gay, but all her happiness had been driven out of her ever since she had been shown folly's way. She now fasts and prays and looks quite wise and grim. This is how the priests destroy human happiness. Thus proud of their piety:

Our pious friends are fill'd with joy,
And constant praises give,
To think they've taught them how to die,
Before the've learn'd to live.

As against this where there is true love between two rational human beings, the formal rites of marriage are not needed. It is a mere mockery when the two individuals already wedded in love are made to submit to religious ceremony as a sanction solemnizing their marriage. This is the theme of the poem entitled "Marriage of the Priests" by "Z", taken from *The National.* It is a protest against the tyranny of the priests:

O God! it is a grievous tyranny
When *empty form* thus mines in the very core
Of natural affection's purity!
The crawling *custom* dwelleth in the gate
Of our pure being's dearest sanctity.[1]

6. Moral Guidance

"A Plain Direction" by Thomas Hood raises the question of the creation of the new moral world. How to find people's true representatives in the parliament, how to find justice in courts and how to find love in churches? It seeks direction:

But since I've found, that weary path
Is quite a common road.
Utopia is a pleasant place,
But how shall I get there?[2]

The first essential in this regard is that the mind must be free and truth must be spoken. Regardless of consequences, as Owen had proclaimed the great truth about religion in the City of London Tavern, every individual must have the courage to follow his example. This is how the poem "Tolerance" ends:

Thus all opinions, that in evil hour
Have been invested with despotic power,
May fatal prove though none can dangerous be;
For Truth must triumph where the mind is free.[3]

The poem entitled, "The Golden Mean" advises against timidity and extreme forbearance. One must have the courage to say the truth

1. Vol. V. (New Series), No. 22, 23 March 1839.
2. Vol. V. (New Series), No. 18, 23 February 1839.
3. Vol. I (Third Enlarged Series), No. 4, 25 July 1840.

and meet the evil, though it should not be taken to the other extreme of revenge and cruelty:

> ***Too much* forbearance is foolish and weak,**
> **Giving license (*Sic*) to all that is wrong;**
> ***Too much* serenity seeketh to weak,**
> **On the weak the revenge of the strong.**
> **Let utility guide us in all that we do**
> **Let us follow the great golden mean**[1]

This needs the attainment of virtue and wisdom as both Shelley and Owen had advised. Robert Nicholl's "Life's Pilgrimage" suggested the same. It is set in the background of Nature which can give moral inspiration to man. The poem demonstrates Wordsworth's influence. Nicholl was a lesser Scottish poet and died young. The forwarding not by 'J.E.', sending the poem for republication, calls Nicholl "a true poet,. . . . a true MAN and a patriot", and *The New Moral World* "instructive and honest periodical". The following stanza will illustrate the point that I am trying to make:

> **This is thy task on earth —**
> **This is thy eager manhood's proud goal;—**
> **To cast all meanness and *world-worship* forth —**
> **And thus exalt the soul!**[2]

'Pencil 'Em's' poem, "On the Formation of Character" gave the same message: people must understand the true Owenite principles and thus reform their character. It is only by learning wisdom and virtue that man can live in the social community where the good of one is the good of all. The following stanza is typical of his message:

> **Awake, arise, ye wise and good,**
> **Assist to chase away**
> **The clouds of darkness which obstruct**
> **The light of coming day.**
> **Remove far hence those evils which**
> **Corrupt the heart of youth;**
> **And place around examples such**
> **As lead to peace and truth.**[3]

The diction of these poems by R. Nicholl and "Pencil" Em" reminds one of Shelley's propaganda poetry.

John Barmby, whom we already know as an enthusiastic Owenite as well as a Shelleyite, and whose first wife contributed to the Owenite journals under the pseudonym of 'KATE', was also a poet. His "An industrial Hymn" ("Affectionately Dedicated to the Communists at Tytherly") emphasizes the value of labour done honestly in a socialist community. Such work is thus pleasure since its fruit

1. Vol. V (New Series), No. 35, 8 June 1839.
2. Vol. I (Third Enlarged Series), No. 15, 10 October 1840.
3. Vol. I (Third Enlarged Series), No. 19, 7 November 1840.

is shared collectively by the whole community. It restores man's primal simplicity and innocence:

Sisters! Brothers!
Fathers! Mothers;
Give the ear to Labour's call;
And like music tones in union,
Work in glad and sweet communion, —
ALL FOR EACH, AND EACH FOR ALL![1]

"The "Stanzas" by J.C. Prince conveys this message with greater clarity and in greater detail. Man must discipline himself so that his passions do not have sway over his reason; he must have courage to stand against the tyrant and fight for the creation of the new moral world. He must devote himself to the communal good by following scientific and cultural pursuits and by just behaviour in his day-to-day living; he should live in every sense of the word for the sake of the community. The last stanza sums up the whole teaching:

They who have kept their sympathies awake,
And scatter'd good for more than custom's sake;
Steadfast and tender in the hour of the need,
Gentle in thought, benevolent in deed :
Whose looks have power to make dissension cease:
Whose smiles are pleasant, and whose words are peace.
They who have lived as harmless as the dove—
Teachers of truth, and ministers of love;—
Love for all moral power,—all mental grace;—
Love for the humblest of the human race;—
Love for that tranquil joy that virtue brings;—
Love for the GIVER of all goodly things.

. . . .

These are the only blest![2]

This is the ideal that can be achieved in this world of woe and sorrow, only if one does not succumb to gloom and despair. This is the message of the poem entitled "Hope" by 'H.G.W'. The following stanza epitomizes the lesson:

So spake I — but not now,
To me the future is with light illumed:
The soul that doth to the prime consort vow;
No more in sense entombed,
Finds in its being all creation wombed;
The Past and Future in the NOW assumed,
And Fear dispelled by victor LOVE is banished from the brow.[3]

So neither gloom nor scorn, which is a supercilious attitude—but love, is the virtue of a socialist. Robert Nicholl explained it in his short lyric entitled "I Dare Not Scorn":

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1. Vol. II (Third Enlarged Series), No. 10, 6 March 1841.
2. Vol. I (Third Enlarged Series), No. 22, 28 November 1840.
3. Vol. I (Third Enlarged Series), No. 24, 26 December 1840.

I pity all that evil are —
I pity and I mourn!
    But the supreme hath fasion'd all —
Ah, oh! I dare not scorn.[1]

Eben Jones in his poem "The Socialist's Devotion" indulges in the sensuous enjoyment of Nature, as well as making, as should every Socialist, a vow of devotion to the goddess of Nature. Devotion to the cause is then the real measure of one's faith and character as a Socialist. The poem is very Shelleyan both in spirit and in style. The following lines serve as a specimen:

Before whose shrine I vow,
With neither faltering nor vindictive brow:—
To seek, despite even death, the overthrow
Of every system which doth thee degrade,
So may I share the noble gratulation
Those patriots feel who watch their expectation
Fulfilling fast,— while brightening through the shade
Of anarchies thou ridest; as in Heaven
Oft Have I seen the moon unfurl her splendour
And trample down the clouds; behind her driven,
A bright subservient convoy they attend her,
Moving victorious to the calm serene,
Where undisturbed she reigns a fair and Halcyon Queen.[2]

7. Nature.

The Owenites took an interest in Nature as we have seen in Chapter 3. It presented a contrast to the sordid atmosphere of commerce and industry. Being a moral force, it liberates the human mind. "Poet's Subbath" by J.C. Prince is an interesting example. It may be well to quote a part of the editorial note:

He is one of the toiling millions, and has lived a life of adventure and labour; but the cares of a family, the stifling atmosphere of a factory and the depressing influence of poverty have, as our readers will perceive from the slight specimen here offered, neither impaired his perception of Nature's beauties, nor his power of painting them in glorious verse, nor deadened his sympathy with all that is good and true in human nature.[3]

The poem describes an early morning scene, when the moon is still visible in the sky, the stars are waning and the sun is about to rise. At this time he thinks of the worshippers going to the "temples of discordant creeds", and his whole thought now is directed towards the question of good and evil. He is happy to think of some people whose religion is that of universal love, and thus his joy in nature increases. "Nature! I love all creatures for thy sake". The first stanza is artistically taut and is the expression of a mind in tension, and I think it is the most representative:

1. Vol. II (Third Enlarged Series), No. I, 2 January 1841.
2. Vol. VI (New Series), No. 54, 2 November 1839.
3. Vol. I (Third Enlarged Series), No. 14, 3 October 1840.

SABBATH! thou are my Ararat of life,
Smiling above the deluge of my cares
My only refuge from the storms of strife,
When constant Hope her noblest aspect wears;
When my torn mind its broken strength repairs,
And volant Fancy breathes a sweeter strain:
Calm season! when my thirsting spirit shares
A draught of joy, unmixed, with aught of pain,
Spending the quiet hours 'mid Nature's green domain.

In my opinion, artistically speaking, this is also a fairly good poem.

C.S. Eyre presented a translation of "Good Night" by Theodore Korner, a leftist German poet on whom, as we have seen in Chapter 3, the Owenites looked with favour. Eyre himself took considerable interest in the movement that led to the Reform Bill of 1832, and was for some time proprietor of three liberal newspapers. The coming of the night is welcomed since it is the "Weary mortal's chief delight!" Therefore:

To all, good night!
Slumber till the morning light!
Slumber till the approaching morrow
Brings its load of care and sorrow
Your rest is watched by heavenly night.
To all, good night![1]

John Barmby in his poem entitled "The Poesie of Community" said that Divinity after giving birth to the loveliness of the earth, veiled it so that one can now perceive it only in nature if one has love in one's heart. The joy is doubled if one also has the love of community at heart:

If view'd alone, but half joys bring;
But seen with others, give they then,
A double joy to human ken;
And, oh! their voices, clear and free,
Chaunt, "Love us in community,"
And mellow echoes in their glee,
Ring to the skies, "Community".[2]

His "Matins"[3] is sheer joy in nature though not very good poetry.

"Songs of the Haymakers" by Eliza Cook—who was very popular in the mid nineties—also describes the sheer joy in nature. True, it does mention that the work is extemely hard and the haymakers are finding it extemely difficult, but the dominant note is that of joy.

1. Vol. I (Third Enlarged Series), No. 21, 21 November 1840.
2. Vol I (Third Enlarged Series), No. 16, 17 October 1840.
3. Vol. I (Third Enlarged Series), No. 21, 21 November 1840.

The moontide is hot, and our foreheads are brown,
Our palms are all shining and hard;
Right close is our work with the wain and the fork,
And but poor is our daily reward,
But there's joy in the sunshine, and mirth in the lark
That skims whistling away over head;
Our spirits are light, though our skins may be dark,
And there's peace with our meal of brown bread.[1]

8. The New Moral World.

All these poems discussed above, whether about the past or the present, law of Necessity or religion, are aspirational in their temper, and they look forward to a bright future. Some of the Owenite poems, however, are explicitly about the future. Robert Buchanan's "Anticipations" while analysing the present misery and chaos, anticipates the much-awaited change:

Even now the shadow of a mighty change
Is coming o'er the nations reason's power
Is felt by all around, and doth unhinge
The rooted ills of time. Each passing hour
Brings nearer virtue's goal; when peace shall shower
Her blessings on the world. The people's night
Is gathering fast, though tyranny may lour,
The human mind eschews foul superstition's might
And promises, ere long, a great and glorious light.[2]

He said the same thing in another poem entitled "On the present aspect of Socialism, and the prospect of the speedy establishment of a co-operative community".[3] "The Power of Truth", a short poem, also deals with the same theme—the celebration of the victory of truth.

Another poem by J.C. Prince, a long poem, draws the picture of the future in detail. The new moral world has no tryrants and bondsmen; war has become non-existent since there are no more imperial interests; women are free and equal; dogma has been replaced by reason:

In fancy, I behold thy Home of Love!
Bathed in the sunlight of an azure June,
Where proud Ben Lomond lifts his form above
The crystal calmness of his own lagoon;
Where timid Peace, the long-foresaken dove,
Sleeps in the lap of joy, and every boon
That harmonizing liberty can give,
Clings round a spot on which 'tis HEAVEN to live!

All these poems depict the future much in the manner of Shelley.

1. Vol. VI (Third Series), No. 52, 21 June 1845.
2. Vol. IV No. 169, 20 January 1838.
3. Vol. V (New Series), No. 31, 25 May 1839.

"The World's Changes" reproduced from the *Irish Journal*, after the description of the past and the present, struck a note of fear that it might be impossible to exterminate evil in future. This invited criticism from the editor who in a note appended to the poem said, "This conclusion only embodies a partial truth, applicable to the present; but "knowledge and truth" unerringly point to changes in the world, which as little resemble the present as the two states depicted in the first and last stanzas resemble each other."[1] Therefore the journal published "A Sequel to 'The World's Changes'", written by 'Pencil 'Em'. It might be interesting to reproduce it below:

And the scene shall be changed from competitive strife,
To the loveful acts of social life.
The city's dark shade, with its care-worn men,
Shall be changed to the meadow lands again
And a merry hand, with heartful glee,
Shall sit in love 'neath their "own fig-tree".
The shadow will pause in his onward flight,
And wonder to find such unity;
But experience with its mirror bright,
Hath revealed to man that Community
Is the only place
That from afflictions and change is free![2]

The 'Shadow' in the poem belongs to the genre of an outsider, or an objective observer or eternity itself. Possibly it is suggested by the character of Queen Mab.

The poet of "Might, with Right" is absolutely certain that the glorious future is round the corner. He communicates his belief in a forceful and inspiring manner.

Now sorrow reigns, the earth complains,
For folly still her power maintains;
But the day shall yet appear,
When the might, with the right, and the truth shall be;
And come what there may,
To stand in the way,
That day the world shall see.[3]

All this hope, this aspiration and longing are embodied in John Barmby's "A Prospect at Tytherly". It might be well to quote it in full:

I stand, methinks, at Tytherly, as under
A lifted banner to the breezes flying, —
The hope of nations, and their special wonder —
While truth is victor, and while error dying,
Gasps on the battle-field of peace and glory;

1. Vol. I (Third Enlarged Series), No. 17, 24 October 1840.
2. Vol. I (Third Enlarged Series), No. 19, 7 November 1840.
3. Vol. II (Third Enlarged Series), No. 4, 23 January 1841.

And oh, I feel the hopeful mind deep ponder
Upon the destiny of years, and winging
Its flight above the wings of time grown hoary;
It flutters towards the future, and, high singing,
Gazes amid its heaven at the shining
Of the bright noon-day Sun of Socialism,
Which knows no evening all its beams combining,
Upon fair Tytherly, as the first flower
It made to bloom, encoloured like a prism
With oneness of variety whose seed
Had flown about the world and sprung in power,
And beautied all around like daisied mead
I stand, methinks, in Tytherly, indeed![1]

I should now say a few words about *The Past, The Present, and The Future* by Robert Buchanan, the most ambitious Owenite poem. It is a long poem written after the pattern of *Queen Mab*, and combines all that is attempted by the poems discussed above. The author has no "pretensions to the character of a POET", and he claims leniency "for the faults of style and composition". He is using the medium of poetry to propagate the ideas of the new social system founded by Robert Owen.

The poem is divided into three cantos. Canto I deals with the past: Rome, Athens, Syria, Egypt, and Palestine. In these lands, with the possible exception of the Athens of Socrates and Plato, "The potent hand of BIGOTRY, has chained the limbs of Free Inquiry". Canto II deals with the present: industrialization and commerce, and exploitation and prostitution. The joy and leisure of the people afforded even under feudalism have been turned into misery and suffering. Canto 3 deals with religion. The doctrine of original sin is opposed with the doctrine of Necessity and the formation of character. It also discusses marriage and love in the old and the new world. Finally,

The world is changed! The face of nature now
Is clothed in smiles, like some bright fond-eyed maid,
Unversed in guile, unchill'd by aught of ill:
All things look bright and holy! Hate and Strife,
No more infuse their poison in the wells,
Whence mankind quench their thirst:[2]

The New Moral World published a comprehensive review of *The Past, The Present, and The Future*. It noted that "To this and the succeeding canto valuable notes are appended, containing much interesting information and explanation of the matters alluded to in the text". These notes, like Shelley's 'Notes' on *Queen Mab*, are on the old civilizations, the Greek philosophers, the doctrine of original sin, the new commerce, and exploitation of the poor by the rich, the laws of love and marriage, and the doctrine of Necessity

1. Vol. I (Third Enlarged Series), No. 15, 10 October 1840.
2. op.cit. 60—61.

and the formation of character. The reviewer also pointed out the "pregnant beauty" and the "felicity of language" as technical virtues of the poem. At the end he advised the readers "to drink deep of lofty spirit and ennobling philosophy, that so with unfaltering step and high resolve they may devote their energies to the realization of the glorious scenes of which the poet sings."[1] No doubt, the Owenites took it as a great poem.

Some of the Owenite poems, as we have seen, are unsigned. Some poets give their initials as does 'A.D.' or 'H.G.W'. Others have names appended, for example, Geo Conrad and John Garwood, whom I have been unable to trace. They seem to have written only a casual poem or two, published in *The New Moral World*. It has not been possible to identify 'Pencil 'Em' who was a regular contributer. J.C. Prince and Ebenezer Jones have, at times, a fairly good piece to their credit, and however bad they may be, one is inclined to regard them as poets. Similarly John Barmby has some poetic fire in him though he can seldom be taken as a poet. Nor can one regard Bobert Buchanan, the most ambitious Owenite versifier, as a poet. Nevertheless, 'Pencil 'Em', J.C. Prince, Ebenezer Jones, John Barmby and Robert Buchanan were the important "poets" of the Owenite movement.

Apart from the poems discussed above, written for the exposition and propagation of the Owenite system, the Owenites also compiled a short collection of Social Hymns which were set to music and sung in their meetings and lectures. They were chiefly meant for the disciples themselves since they presented briefly the essentials of Owenism, which essentials were also separately given in a tabular form in the same work. These hymns were, in fact, substitutes for religious hymns and prayer books. Some of them were improvised with popular relgious hymns as models, some were specially composed, and some were taken from English poetry. Some of them were "written or selected by Mr. Stevens, the Organist." The compiler explained in his preface to the 1835 edition of *Social Hymns* that *The Crisis* and *The New Moral World* had published little by way of hymns, and therefore he could not give a better collection than this. He again accounted for it by saying in his Preface to the 1840 edition that such poems as could at once be set to music, as well as be synonymous with the new system, were rather few in number. The selection had however been issued because of the great demand for the hymns.

The 1835 edition arranges the hymns under various headings: Truth, Reason, Charity, Union, Sympathy, Community, etc. In the first section, there are twelve hymns about truth. The first is a prayer that truth may spread wide among people so that it could

1. Vol. VII. (New Series) No. 79, 25 April 1840.

have a deep effect on their lives and thus the process of creating a millennium be hastened. The second says that the light of truth will dispel the darkness of error as well as bring about the death of superstition. Similarly the rest of the hymns sing of the various qualities of truth and the new possibilities that its diffusion can bring about.

The 1840 edition does not group the hymns under various headings but disperses them to give a sense of variety. It carries lines 252—260 from Canto V of *Queen Mab* as an epigraph . It also has two quotations from Shelley's *The Rovolt of Islam* as hymns: 'Wisdom' (V. Song, 1 & 2) and 'Equality' (V. Song, 3 & 4). One of the Festival Songs, No. 4, seems to be a description of Shelley's life:

A BOY — I dreamed of liberty!
A youth — I said, "But *am* I free!"
A man — I *felt* that slavery
Had bound me in her chain:
But yet, the dream which, when a boy,
Was wont musings to employ,
Fast rolling years could not destroy,
With all their grief and pain.

The "veil" is Shelley's most important symbol. So it is of the Owenites. The "veil" is frequently used as a symbol in the *Social Hymns*. For example:

Soon, soon will come that glorious day,
Inscrib'd on Mercy's brow
When truth shall rend the Veil away
That blinds the nations now.[1]

Dark superstition's veil
No more men's eyes will blind
But truth unsullied will display
Her charms to all mankind.[2]

The Owenites did not use the "veil" in its Platonic sense, as invariably did Shelley. In his case it combines the material and the transcendental truth; he is a poet concerned with both the temporal and eternal reality. The materialists, however, confined its use to the material truth—understanding of the scientific laws at work in a society. Robert Owen himself used the "veil" at quite a few places but in a very attenuated form. To give only one example, "This artificial veil to the real mixing of human existence, to the hollowness of a most unsatisfactory life, must now be withdrawn, all secrets will be made known".[1] Shelley first used the symbol in *Queen Mab*, when the Fairy asks the Spirit of Ianthe to ascend the car with her:

1. 1835 ed. p. 32.
2. 1840 ed. p. 4.
3. *The future of the Hyman Race* p. 29.

And it is yet permitted me, to rend
The veil of mortal frailty, that the spirit
Clothed in its changeless purity, may know
How soonest to accomplish the great end
For which it hath its being, and may taste
That peace, which in the end all life will share.
(I. 180—185).

It is the veil of ignorance that is to be rent so that the Spirit could understand the laws of history. In Canto VIII, it is again used in the same sense:

Joy to the Spirit came.
Through the wide rent in Time's eternal veil,
Hope was seen beaming through the mists of fear:
(11—13).

It is in this sense that the Owenite poets used the "veil". The following passage from "The Revolt of The Bees" by J.C.Prince, which is written very much in the spirit and style of Shelley, will illustrate the point:

A thousand systems have been formed and wrought,
Where man hath looked for good, but looked in vain!

A thousand doctrines writ, diffused, and taught,
Adding new links to Errors tangled chain;

But ah! the Apostles of unfettered thought,
Unswerving foes to Falsehood and his train—
Shall lift the veil of mystery at last,
And future times atone for all the past.[1]

In this very sense, the symbol was used in the poem entitled "Socialism":

When education shall have mov'd the veil,
From governors and govern'd, this one truth
Age after age the lesson of the few,
Shall mould the face of nature all anew.[2]

In the above examples from the Owenite poetry one can see a tendency to use the "veil" in an attenuated manner. This is characteristic of the attitude of the Owenites to simplify every thing, born of their profound concern with utmost clarity and effective communication.

To sum up, the shadow of *Queen Mab* looms large over the Owenite poetry. It is propaganda poetry, pure and simple. It is a demonstration of an extreme oversimplification of their own literary theory. Some Owenite poets show scant regard for artistic standards, they ignore craftsmanship. In Shelley's case, technique suffered

1. Vol. VI (New Series), No. 58, 30 November 1839.
2. Vol. VII (New Series), No. 72, 7 March 1840.

because of the very nature of his creative process. It could be said that the impetuosity of his temperament was partly born of his complete maladjustment with society and was partly rooted in his passionate desire to reform it in a drastic manner. The Owenites composed their poems, it seems, coolly and deliberately, with a specific purpose in view. In their case, artistry did not matter, and they always claimed lenience on the part of the reader. Most of them, being manual workers, had neither the necessary background nor the leisure to master the art. Nevertheless, one does come across a good poetic piece here and there in their poetry. In a sense, perhaps the Owenite poets were also impetuous and always in a hurry to complete their poems since they were trying to do their bit for the common aim—to diffuse the truth as well as frustrate the efforts of the evil-minded to obstruct their cause. However, among the Owenite poets, one does come across a few poets recognized as minor minor; they also published some poets who are assessed as minor English poets. Therefore one does discover all sorts of pieces ranging from good to bad. But all these are used for the exposition and furtherance of Owenite Socialism.

CONCLUSION

The spirit of *Queen Mab* looms large over the Owenite movement. Since 1813, the Radicals looked upon it as a great document of revolutionary thought. It made Shelley the poet of the working classes. It is unsuccessful as a poem, but it has won Shelley a place in the history of Socialist thought and of Socialist movement.

Owenite Socialism as a revolutionary movement was passionately concerned with literature. The Owenites had their own point of view which is very near that of Socialist Realism in Russia after the Revolution of 1917. The revolutionaries have a great natural urge to tinker with literature and to use it for propaganda, and thus distort its values. In reality, this approach is actuated by nobler motives. It is excessive moral zeal demonstrated in their efforts to reform society in a drastic manner. Aesthetic values must suffer during such periods—artistic standards cannot compensate for lack of daily necessities. Perhaps insistence on high artistic standards is a pre-occupation of the aristocrat or is a bourgeois notion. Equally weighty is the question as to whether mass culture does not lead to the vulgarization of culture itself. The Owenites rightly maintained that this vulgarization in a capitalist society is brought about by the bourgeoisie who control the means of entertainment. But as regards literary standards, they claimed lenience for their technical weaknesses and they had no illusion whatsoever about the value of their own poetry. The Owenite critics hoped that in the ideal socialist system, the ideal labour-poet will, no doubt, attain very high standards. Novertheless, I should like to observe here that even in a capitalist society, insistence on high artistic standards is born of true love of literature, and has nothing to do with one's class allegiance. Shelley's own denunciation of his *Queen Mab*, knowing full well, that it was his only popular work, is a case in point. It is the power of creating an organic rhythm out of one's material that in the final analysis matters in poetry.

It seems that the Owenites were men of culture, with a fair knowledge of the literature of England and Europe. They kept an eye on the press and took note of the new tendencies in society and literature. Their appraisal of Shelley's poetry is in no way inferior to the Shelley criticism, contemporary with their own. In fact,

they were a little ahead of their times. The literary circles had recognized Shelley as a major poet, but not without a good deal of reluctance. The Owenites were clear and firm in their evaluation. They, however, oversimplified his poetry and exaggerated his importance as a poet. To them, he was the Socialist prophet-poet, and the greatest poet of them all.

Shelley as a poet has always been a subject of controversy. During the nineteenth century, his ideas made him either a prophet or an apostate. Only during the brief days of the Shelley Society did he enjoy a secure literary reputation. One does come across excessive eulogy in their writings, but some of them, no doubt, are fairly objective. It was some enthusiasts of Shelley Society who inspired the youthful Yeats with love for Shelley. But he outgrew Shelley's influence mainly because of his dissatisfaction with his style. It was, however, the taste for T.S.Eliot's poetry and criticism that made Shelley unpopular in England. Moreover, the poets of the 1930s too had a word of censure for him. But again with the revival of interest in Romantic literature, Shelley is being dispassionately studied. He has his weaknesses as well as virtues; he is neither a great poet and thinker nor is he beneath serious consideration. One could say today, without fear of contradiction, that Shelley is a major English poet.

Finally, if we take the Owenites, the Chartists, and then the Fabians together, we come to the conclusion that the genius of Shelley broods over the whole British Socialist movement. Shelley influenced large sections of the British people during the whole of the nineteenth century. His poetry appealed to the *elite* as well as the proletariat. His poetry inspired action. In view of all this, shall we still call him "an ineffectual angel"?

APPENDIX

(Editions of Shelley's Works till 1834)

Juvenile Poetry

1. Original Poetry; /By/Victor and Cazire/Printed by C. and W. Phillips,/for the Authors;/and Sold by J.J. Stockdale, 41, Pall-Mall/ and all the booksellers/1810.

2. Posthumous Fragments/of/Margaret Nicholson/Edited by/ John Fitzvictor/Oxford:/Printed and Sold by J. Munday/1810.

Queen Mab

1. QUEEN MAB:/A PHILOSOPHICAL POEM/WITH NOTES/BY PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY/LONDON/PRINTED BY P. B. SHELLEY, 23, Chapel Street, Grosvenor Square/1813.

2. QUEEN MAB/A PHILOSPHICAL POEM/WITH NOTES/ BY/PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY/WILLIAM CLARK/LONDON/ 1821.

3. QUEEN MAB/A PHILOSOPHICAL/POEM/by PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY/NEW YORK/Printed and sold by J. Baldwin// 1821.

4. QUEEN MAB/BY/PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY/LONDON/R. CARLILE/1822.

5. Another edition of no. 4 (as indicated in British Museum copy).

6. Another edition of no. 4, 1823.

7. QUEEN MAB/BY PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY/Mrs. Carlile and sons, 1832.

8. QUEEN MAB/BY PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY/John Brooks, 421, Oxford Street, London/1829.

9. QUEEN MAB,/OR/THE DESTINY OF MAN./A PHILOSOPHICAL POEM/BY PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY/LONDON /STEPHEN HUNT/1830.

10. QUEEN MAB:/A PHILOSOPHICAL POEM://WITH NOTES/BY PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY/H. HETHERINGTON.

11. QUEEN MAB/BY/PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY/(CAMPES' EDITION) PARIS.

Other Poems

1. ALASTOR;/OR/THE SPIRIT OF SOLITUDE:/AND OTHER POEMS/BY/PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY/1816.

2. Laon and Cythna;/OR/THE REVOLUTION/OF/THE GOLDEN CITY/A Vision of the Nineteenth Century/In the Stanza of Spenser/by/Percy B. Shelley/1818/C. and J. Ollier, London.

3. THE REVOLT OF ISLAM;/A POEM,/IN TWELVE CANTOS./BY/PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY/1817./C. and J. Ollier, London.

4. THE REVOLT OF ISLAM;/A POEM,/IN TWELVE CANTOS/By/PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY/1818/C. and J. Ollier, London. (A re-issue of the above, with a new date).

5. The/Revolt of Islam;/A Poem,/In Twelve Cantos/By/ Percy Bysshe Shelley/London:/Printed for John Brooks, /421, Oxford Street./1829.

(According to T. J. Wise, this was "composed of 'remaineder' sheets of the original edition of 1818, provided with a new title page dated 1829, and bearing the imprint of John Brooks").

6. ROSALIND AND HELEN/A MODERN ECLOGUE;/ WITH OTHER POEMS:/BY/PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY/ 1819./LONDON./C. and J. Ollier.

7. The Cencil/A tragedy,/In Five Acts/By Percy Bysshe Shelley/ Italy/Printed for C. and J. Ollier/London/1819.

8. The Cenci/A Tragedy/In Five Acts/By/Percy Bysshe Shelley/Second Edition/London/C. and J. Ollier/ 1821.

9. PROMETHEUS UNBOUND/A LYRICAL DRAMA/ IN FOUR ACTS/WITH OTHER POEMS:/BY/PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY/London/C. and J. Ollier/1820.

10. OEDIPUS TYRANNUS/OR/SWELLFOOT THE TYRANT/A Tragedy/In /Two Acts/Published for the Author,/By J. Johnston, 98, Cheapside, and sold by/All Booksellers/1820.

11. ADONAIS/An Elegy on the/DEATH OF JOHN KEATS/ AUTHOR, OF ENDYMION HYPERION, etc./1821/Pisa.

12. Another edition of the above—Printed by W. Metcalff,/ And sold by Messrs. Gee and Briges/Market-Hill/Cambridge.

13. EPIPSYCHIDION:/VERSES ADDRESSED TO THE/ NOBLE/AND UNFORTUNATE LADY/EMILIA/London/C. and J. Ollier/1821.

14. HELLAS/A lyrical Drama/London/1822.

15. THE MASQUE OF ANARCHY/A POEM/BY PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY/NOW FIRST PUBLISHED WITH A PREFACE BY LEIGH HUNT/1832.

Selected or Collected Works

1. POETICAL PIECES/BY THE LATE PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY/C. and J. Ollier/ 1823.

2. POSTHUMOUS POEMS/OF/PECRCY BYSSHE SHELLEY/London, 1824/Printed for John and Henry L. Hunt,/ Tavistock Street, Covent Garden.

3. MISCELLANEOUS/AND/POSTHUMOUS POEMS/OF/ PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY/William Benbow, 252, High Holborn/1826.

4. MISCELLANEOUS/POEMS/BY/PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY/London/William Benbow, 252, High Holborn/1826.

5. THE/POETICAL WORKS/OF/COLERIDGE, SHELLEY, AND KEATS/Complete in one volume/Paris/Published by A. and W. Galignani/1829.

6. THE/BEAUTIES/OF/PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY/ consisting of/Miscellaneous selections From His/Poetical Works/ The entire poems of/Adonais and Alastor, and/A revised Edition of Queen Mab/Free from all the objectionable passages./with/A A Biographical Preface/London:/Stephen Hunt, York Street/Covent Garden/1830.

7. Another edition of no. 6, 1830.

8. THE/WORKS/OF/PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY,/ WITH/HIS LIFE/In Two Volumes./ London:/Printed and Published by John Ascham, 71, Chancery/Lane, Holborn/and Sold by James Pattie, 16, High Street, Bloomsbury,/and all Booksellers in Town and Country./1834.

Prose.

1. ZASTROSSI/A ROMANCE/BY/P.B.S./Printed for G. Wilkie and J. Robins,/57, Paternoster Row/1810.

2. ST. IRVINE/OR/THE ROSICRUCIAN/A ROMANCE/ A Gentleman of the University of Oxford/1811.

3. THE/NECESSITY/OF/ATHEISM/Printed by C. and W. Phillips/Sold in London and Oxford.

(It was issued in 1811).

4. AN/ADDRESS/TO THE/IRISH PEOPLE/BY PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY/Dublin/1812.

5. A PROPOSAL FOR AN ASSOCIATION OF PHILANTHROPISTS/1812.

6. A DECLARATION OF RIGHTS/1812.

7. FREE SPEECH AND FREE PRESS/BY PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY/A LETTER TO LORD ELLENBOROUGH/ occasioned by/A Sentence passed by him upon Mr. J.D./Eaton for publishing Part Third of Paine's/"Age of Reason" about the year 1812.

8. A/VINDICATION/OF/NATURAL DIET/London/Printed for J. Callow, Medical Bookseller, Crown/Court, Princes Street/ Soho, By Smith and Davy, Queen Street, Seven Dials/1813.

9. A/REPUTATION OF DEISM/IN/A DIALOGUE/ London/Printed by Sculze and Dean,/13 Poland Street/1814.

10. A PROPOSAL/FOR PUTTING/REFORM TO THE VOTE/THROUGHOUT THE KINGDOM/BY THE HERMIT OF MARLOW/1817.

11. "We Pity the Plumage, but Forget The Dying Bird"/AN/ ADDRESS TO THE PEOPLE ON THE DEATH OF PRINCESS CHARLOTTE,/By the Hermit of Marlow/1817.

12. HISTORY/OF/A SIX WEEKS' TOUR/London C. and J. Ollier/1817.

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5. *Promotheus Unbound*: C. & J. Ollier, 1820.

6. *Oedipus Tyrannus* published for the Author by J. Johnston, 98 Cheapside, and sold by All Booksellers, 1820.

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2. *The Cutting an Agate*, 1919.
3. *Collected Poems*, 1937.

IX. Periodical Literature:

(The contemporary criticism of Shelley, though some of it is discussed in this thesis, is not listed here, since all of it can be seen in one Volume, *The Unextinguished Hearth*, by N.I. White.)

Periodicals:

1. *The Athenaeum*
1. No. 249, 4 August 1832.
2. No. 250, 11 August 1832.
3. No. 316, 16 November 1833.
4. No. 635, 28 December 1839.

2. *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*
1. Vol. XI No. 61 February 1822.
2. Vol. XLII. No. 74, March 1823.
3. Vol. XLIX No. 306, April 1841.

3. *The Christian Teacher.*
1. Vol. I (New Series), No. 5, 1839.

4. *The Edinburgh Review*
1. Vol. XXXII, No. 64, October 1819.
2. Vol. XL. No. 80, July 1824.
3. Vol. XLI No. 92, January 1825.

5. *Essays and Studies* (English Association) 1959.	
6. *Fraser's Magazine*	1. Vol. III. No. 17, June 1831. 2. Vol. XVII. No. 102, June 1838.
7. *The General Baptist Repository and Missionary Observer.*	1. Vol. I. (New Series) No. 5, May 1839.
8. *The Monthly Chronicle*	Vol. VII. February 1841.
9. P.M.L.A.	1. Vol. XXXIII, 1918. 2. Vol. XL 1923. 3. Vol. LVIII, 1943.
10. *The Quarterly Review*:	1. Vol. XXXI. No. 42, April 1819. 2. Vol. XXXIV. No. 67, September 1826. 3. Vol. XXXVII. No. 74, March 1828. 4. Vol. LXV· No. 129, December 1839. 5. Vol. LXV. No. 130, March 1840.
11. *The South Atlantic Quarterly Review*:	1. Vol. XXIX. No. 3, July 1930.
12. *Tait's Edinburgh Magazine*:	1. Vol. II. No. 7, October 1832. 2. Vol. II. No. 9, December 1832.
13. *The Westminister Review*:	1. Vol. XXXV. No. 2 April 1841.

Newspapers:

1. *The Evening Mail*	29 May 1817.
2. *The Morning Chronicle.*	1. 12 August 1822. 2. 2 September 1837.

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(Percy Bysshe Shelley, Robert Owen, Owenism, Socialism, and the Owenite Journals are not indexed as such).

SEPERATE INDEX

THE SOCIAL ORPHEUS

This book, an original contribution to English Studies, is a successful attempt at an analysis of the use of Shelley in the writings of Robert Owen and the Owenites. From among the contemporary Romantic poets, they identified themselves with Shelley, who alone was in perfect accord with them. Like Robert Owen, he had dedicated his life to the cause of the downtrodden.

The author also studies the Owenite view of Shelley in the context of the Shelley criticism during the years 1815—1840, as well as the rest of the nineteenth century. Moreover in his discussion of Shelley, he also keeps in view the Shelley criticism, contemporary with us.

This book establishes that Owen knew Shelley and his writings well, and drew upon 'Notes' to *Queen Mab* for his ideas on love and marriage. Besides, their main sources being the same, there is an almost complete correspondence between their system of ideas. The Owenites also demonstrate a systematic point of view about literature, which has a close correspondence with Shelley's poetics. Their appraisal of his poetry, though in no way inferior to the contemporary criticism of Shelley, is only an illustration of the various aspects of their own system. Besides, they cited Shelley's authority on almost every occasion; he was a prophet-poet.

The author also reveals how the genius of Shelley broods over the whole British Socialist movement. Shelley influenced large sections of the British people throughout the nineteenth century. His poetry appealed to the *elite* as well as the proletariat. It inspired action. He thus explodes Matthew Arnold's "ineffectual angel" myth.

Finally, it is interesting to note the relevance of the book to the socio-economic situation in Pakistan today. Besides it can also guide us to evolve a new aesthetics for the Third World.